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ATIONAL VIEW OF THE BIBLE.

By REV. NEWTON M. MANN.

*Bibl. Lit.
Gen.*

A RATIONAL VIEW

OF

THE BIBLE.

A COURSE OF LECTURES

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following lectures have been prepared for the simple purpose of presenting, in as concise and popular a manner as possible, modern ideas of the Bible. No way of indicating what that book is seems at present so promising as to inquire how and when it came to be. No amount of critical argument applied to the text itself is likely to convince many that the Scriptures are less than infallible, so long as the impression subsists that these writings were produced in some miraculous fashion, and therefore, as to their composition, are as distinct from other books as light is from darkness. But if it can be shown that these writings were a natural growth in Israel, that they are without exception severally the product of conditions and exigencies which are still traceable, that in many cases they bear a wholly fictitious date and authorship, there is no need to go further or make any direct assault upon infallibility. In every reasonable mind that theory surrenders without more ado.

A very great importance therefore attaches to this discussion. Whatever a man's views on the subject, he must

feel the need of looking well to the ground he stands on. If the Bible is, as is popularly taught, God's word, it is high time that we all knew it, for it is the most momentous fact within the bounds of conception. If the Bible is something very different from what it is popularly taught to be, there is equally imperative need of learning that fact. People in general have heard one statement from their childhood ; is it not time now to listen to another statement?

The writer is aware that the views set forth in these lectures will strike many as nothing more than ingenious—an exercise in mental gymnastics, to be read, perhaps, as a curiosity, but without any actual bearing upon the subject discussed. If he had sprung upon the world a novel theory of his own, the writer might not demur at such a judgment. But he is in the main stating the conclusions of others, and these the foremost biblical critics in the world. He would also remind readers of this class that these views are not distinctively heretical, since they are largely shared by the author of the article on the Bible in the last edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," whom the Scotch Kirk has tried and *not* convicted of doctrinal sin, by Dean Stanley (*clarum et venerabile nomen*), and by not a few other prominent men "in good and regular standing."

In explaining the formation of the Bible on purely natural principles we but fall into line with the whole tendency of scientific thought since the modern revival of knowledge. The time was when men contented them-

selves with saying, "God made the world"; and no little opposition was offered when the scientists set out to learn, if they could, when and how it was made. But now certainly the universe is nowise hurt by the discovery that its transformations (and apparently its genesis) are the result of natural laws which we see constantly in operation. Thought in regard to the Bible follows the same order of development. It has been said "God gave the book." Now the question is again as to manner and time. And what if study into the making of the book, as before into the making of the world, leads to the positive conclusion that the process was a purely natural one? Are we the worse off for learning the ways of God in the development of history and of literature? Indeed there is no more reason why we should shrink from the conclusion that the government of the human world, the evolution of thought, of morals and religion, are by natural law, than there was for revolt against the now conceded doctrine that the earth has taken its present form and constitution solely from the operation of natural causes.

Nor is the distance between God and man widened by this mode of thinking. When it was said that God made the universe in a week, some six thousand years ago, the impression was apt to obtain that he then withdrew from the scene. At all events the mind seeking to contemplate his activity in nature was always inclined to go back to that memorable week. But since creation has been seen to be a beginningless, ceaseless process, the immanency of God in nature, the immediateness of his activity, has

been brought home to us. Similarly the teaching that the Bible alone is God's word has tended to foster a feeling that Divinity had removed out of speaking distance for the last eighteen hundred years. On the contrary the breaking down of this exclusive claim for old time inspiration, and the assertion that the sole essential quality of God's word is *truth*, bring the Eternal Presence into instant communication with every pure spirit.

Moreover a great wrong is done to the Scriptures themselves by the current notion that they are of a supernatural character. They are put under obligation to speak always in the tone of a god. There have been Bibles—our grandmothers had them—which were suited to the vindication of such a theory, opening infallibly to some sweet psalm, or gracious parable, or divine service of charity. But the Bibles now in use (or rather not in use) are apt to open perversely to the most inconvenient passages—which it must be confessed are the more common—confusing the ordinary reader with a vague sense of incongruity, and disposing him to close the book at once lest he commit the unpardonable sin of suspecting or misunderstanding the utterances of the Holy Ghost. So it goes with the many, but the few who teach *must* read. These, under the common prepossession that the book is the “word of God,” are forced into the attitude of apologists, forever on the quest of ways and means to save the text from any imputation of error. The apologist is not concerned to discover the truth, but to make out that a given thing is the truth. It matters not that an ancient

book was written under entirely false conceptions of the earth and its motions, the contrary must somehow be established, and *Genesis* must be kept abreast the latest deductions of geology. So in the course of a hundred years, while a science is being developed, the sacred writer is made to tell a hundred different stories about one and the same thing. This is injustice to the Bible, and the longer this method is pursued the worse it will be for the book. On the contrary interest in the reading is quickened by the new and rational theory of its origin. It ceases to be an armory of texts with which to crush an opponent, and takes on a purely human quality which quite atones for all the mistakes it contains. We read it as the record of a people's highest life, a book unique, and yet natural as any in the world; a book in which are many discordant voices, as in every congress of strong and ardent minds; a revelation, not of what is in heaven or what is to come, but of what is present in the soul of man.

Some embarrassment has been felt in the preparation of these lectures from the largeness of the subject, and the comparative novelty of the views presented which would seem to require an array of proofs quite beyond the limits of a few addresses. The alternative was finally chosen of presenting as clearly as might be the modern view, with such leading evidence as time would allow, leaving the hearer to judge, from his own knowledge of the Scriptures and from further reading, of its probability. Advantage has been taken of this publication to supple-

ment the text with a few notes out of the great mass of evidence at command, partially to make up for this deficiency. However, the reader is to be reminded that questions of this kind do not admit of complete demonstration. But, as between the new theory and the old, notwithstanding the latter has been bolstered up by centuries of critical labor, the probabilities are already overwhelmingly in favor of the new. And, it must be conceded, there is no getting beyond probability in favor of any theory on such a subject. It may be possible to show that any given hypothesis cannot be the true one, but to show absolutely that another hypothesis is the true one is, in the nature of the case, impossible.

During the delivery of these lectures the challenge has been heard, "Where are your proofs?" People forget that the old theory has no proofs whatever. It stands simply by the force of tradition. There is no demonstrating its assumptions. And simply because the old theory is so weak on the score of probability, because it is found on critical examination in the light now available to be beset with such insuperable difficulties—simply for this reason rational scholars have cast about for some other way of regarding the Bible, which shall better answer the requirements of reason, and at least have the *likelihood* of being true.

Under these conditions the question between the traditional and the modern view is submitted. The writer sincerely hopes that a few, at least, of those into whose hands his work may fall will get inside of the theory

presented sufficiently to form a candid estimate of its value as an explanation of the Bible in comparison with the theory it is proposed to replace.

The doctrine set forth in the following pages is drawn mainly from the works of Dr. A. Kuenen, the eminent professor of theology at Leiden, to whose comprehensive elucidation of the whole subject the reader is referred who desires to push investigations further.

FIRST LECTURE.

THE HISTORICAL BASIS.

BY common consent the most notable book, or collection of books, in the world is the Bible. No other literature has been so much written upon or talked about. It would be an almost endless task to enumerate the works of comment, of exegesis, of apology and of criticism that have appeared. And every year more and more of these works are launched upon the world. Add to this that in every sermon that is preached every Sunday in the year to some hundreds of thousands of congregations, a text is taken from this book and some explanation attempted; that then the special study is taken up in Bible-class and Sunday-school; that it is enjoined as a religious duty, by the Protestant churches at least, to pursue in private this reading and study,—taking all this into account, it may seem that this particular field is already receiving all the attention that can profitably be given to it, and that a rationalist, at any rate, might better find some other topic.

In this judgment I should concur, but that the interest in biblical studies has of late been greatly increased—thanks to the labors especially of a Dutch school of critics—by the application of modern scientific methods of investigation, making it the special duty of the Liberal

pulpit to present in popular form the new ideas which scholars have brought out concerning this book. This duty has already been done in a very satisfactory manner by several Unitarian ministers,* who have put the result of their studies in the shape of permanent contributions to the literature of the subject, and made it the easier for others to speak. With these aids it will be my fault if, in the series of discourses now undertaken, I fail to set before you a tolerably clear conception of the growth of the Hebrew literature according to the latest and best established view.

It must be owned a great deal of the study given to the Bible is given to little purpose because it does not go back of a current assumption as to the nature of the book and the manner and time in which it was written. These are fundamental questions, and yet in the circles where the Bible is most read they are never raised. Just what notion the ordinary reader has of the mode in which the world became possessed of the Bible, he might not find it easy himself to say, but he has always regarded it as "the word of God," and he supposes that it, in some way, came down from God out of heaven. Pressed to the point, he will admit that it must have been written by the hands of men, but these men were so under the control of the Holy Spirit that they wrote only what was dictated to them. The Holy Spirit was in the habit in those days of taking ignorant men and communicating through them

* Notably, Rev. John W. Chadwick and Rev. J. T. Sunderland. Of Mr. Chadwick's book, "The Bible of To-Day," I have made a free use.

the most astonishing wisdom. These different writings, it is supposed, were produced somewhat in the order in which they stand in our Bibles, and through the persons whose names are there attached to them. First appeared what are called the five books of Moses, and then in regular succession the various books of history, song, wisdom and prophecy. This chronological order has become as thoroughly established as any point of orthodoxy, and to raise a question as to the correctness of this order has even been regarded as rank heresy.

Some of us went recently to hear a lecture on "Mistakes of Moses,"—a very funny lecture on a somewhat serious subject. The lecturer, an avowed enemy of the Bible, evidently thought that, in showing up the "mistakes," he had made out a case against the book. I am aware that as some look at it this would follow. Some there are yet, no doubt, who are puzzled at the suggestion that Moses could make a mistake. But this is not the point that troubles the rational reader of the Bible. He knows that Moses was the leader of what was certainly nothing but a horde of barbarians, fresh from Egyptian bondage; that the time was the very dawn of Hebrew history; that the art of writing the Hebrew tongue must have been only in its infancy;* and that this man, what-

* Some question is even raised as to the art of writing being known at all at the exodus. The fact has been assumed on the strength of the tradition that Moses inscribed the Ten Commandments in stone, and from two or three references to writing in the Pentateuch. But since we have learned the late date of the Pentateuch, its evidence on such a matter is very weak. The Egyptians at that time were writing only in hieroglyphs, and there is some difficulty in thinking that the Hebrews had the art of writing in characters representing sounds.

ever ascendancy he had over his people, was yet one of their number, partaking to some extent their ignorance and superstitions. And knowing all this, the wonder of the rational reader is, not that Moses made some mistakes, but that he did not make a thousand times more mistakes than would appear on the supposition that he wrote what is accredited to him. We are utterly confounded at his wisdom, not at his ignorance. The mystery lies in the wonderful provision for future ages. How should a barbaric general or law-giver, or any man of his time, have produced the elaborate ritual and the fully developed code of morals which we find in the Pentateuch? This is the real question.

The orthodox get over this difficulty in a manner by having recourse to the theory of a supernatural inspiration. Of course, by this theory a perfect system of morals might be revealed as well by a barbarian as by another. But this theory of the origin of the Scriptures is no longer tenable. Revelations are not made by handing them, cut and dried, down from heaven. If we are going to talk of revelation at all, it must be regarded as coming by natural courses, and as bearing a just relation to the time and place of its appearance. While it is considered on one side a divine inspiration, it must, on the other, be considered as an outcome of human conditions. The best thought of a barbaric age about God and about human obligations must still be barbaric, by any rational view, even when we admit a doctrine of inspiration.

The only way out of this difficulty is to say that Moses could never have written these books which are called by his name. But aside from the fact that he must have been incompetent to produce the writings, it would have been the height of absurdity to offer such a scheme of ecclesiastical organization to an utterly rude and barbarian people, as the Israelites must have been. These degraded rovers of the desert, comparable to no people that we know, unless it be the wild Indians of our western wilderness—what could they do with all the machinery elaborated to such infinite detail in *Leviticus*? They wanted nothing to worship but a fetich—any stone or tree would serve; they could use no ceremonial beyond a wild dance and such magic incantations as belong to worship among the uncivilized races in all ages.

This is not an unwarranted inference as to the then state of the Israelites. The traditions of their bondage in Egypt, of their atrocities in Canaan, and of their subsequent miserably idolatrous condition, all go to confirm what is in itself a reasonable supposition, that the beginnings of this people were laid in a very low order of culture. No man among them could have produced the Pentateuch; nor could they have understood it, or made any use of it, had it by any miracle been given them.

This first condition for forming a correct judgment of the books, their date and authorship, has been very generally disregarded both by friends and foes. Apologists go back to the date of the exodus and seem not to dream

but that they are to find the moral perceptions and the theological ideas of the foremost people of this present time. The marginal notes of our Bibles and the tone of most commentators presuppose that Moses was a cultivated gentleman, and that his followers, bating a rather vexatious instability, were quite up to our average city congregations. The avowed enemies of the Bible attack the book on the same assumption, and bring the prophet of the old time to as sharp an account for his sayings and doings as though he were a preacher in one of our metropolitan pulpits. This method leads to nothing. It ignores the historic realities, and carries us round and round in a circle of vagaries. The first necessity for an understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures is a correct notion, in outline, of the development and career of the Hebrew people. Knowing what the people were in their different stages of progress, we may be able to judge to some extent from the character of any writing in what age it was written. The same principles are applicable in an investigation of the literature of Israel which we apply to the study of any other literature. In Israel, as elsewhere, history and song, law and ritual, were developed along with the growth of the people. Long before the art of writing was known, the ancients composed rude poems which were repeated from mouth to mouth. These poems among people of more organizing faculty than the Hebrews received addition and refinements from the minstrels, until, caught up and completed by some master

mind, the compacted whole became a great epic. But such a completed work does not date from the period of the events it chronicles. Homer is back in the dim days of Grecian history, but the events he relates, if they are events, occurred centuries before. Homer no doubt gathered up and fused into a continuous tale the fragments of minstrelsy which the lips of many generations had brought down to him. At any rate fugitive songs of battle and victory, tales of adventure and wars, were current among the Hebrews from a time dating back possibly in some cases even beyond the days of Moses. At first they were not written, for the people had no knowledge of writing. These war-songs and narratives told the half legendary tales of the origin of the tribe, of the triumphant passage out of Egyptian bondage, of the glories of their first great leader, of the marvellous achievements of his successor. Whenever these barbarians learned the art of writing, these songs and legends were doubtless the first things recorded; and with these the literature of the people began. Fragments at least of these oldest writings are embedded in what are called the historical books of the Bible. Some of these writings are there called by name, as the *Book of Jasher*, *The Wars of Jahveh*;* other early fragments are the *ten words* commonly called the Ten

* Written in the common version, "Jehovah." Both the true orthography and the true pronunciation of the word are in doubt, but scholars are agreed that "Jehovah," at any rate, is wrong. I have given the spelling that seems to be preferred, though the pronunciation is better indicated by the form used in the "Bible for Learners," *Yahweh*.

Commandments, Jacob's Blessing,* the Song of Deborah,† the "Book of Covenants."‡ These earliest written documents the best scholars now conclude appeared from 800 to 1000 years B. C., that is to say, from 300 to 500 years after the death of Moses.

Before the writing of the books of Jasher§ and of The Wars of Jahveh,|| the very names of which have been strange now these thousands of years—before these books were written, that is, during the time of Moses, and some centuries after, Israel produced no literature whatever. The people had their legends and war-songs, their traditions, more or less historical, which passed from mouth to mouth, some of which long afterward were written down and are preserved in one and another book of the Old Testament, but nothing more.

A true historic picture of Israel must then be the basis of a just examination into the age and authorship of the various portions of the Old Testament. The outlines of such a picture represent that people emerging from Egypt somewhere about 1320¶ B. C., in a condition beneath

* Gen. xlix.

† Judges v.

‡ A set of practical rules for the regulation of a somewhat primitive society, found in Ex. xxi.—xxiii. 19.

§ Josh. x. 13; 2 Sam. 1. 18.

|| Num. xxi. 14.

¶ The marginal notes in the common version have it 1491 B. C., but there appears to have gone into the reckoning of the time between Moses and David about 170 years too much. Forty years are given to the reign of Saul, who, according to recent critics, ruled only two years. Other chronological amendments are made of the period of the Judges to bring the exodus down to the date required by Egyptian history and the monumental inscriptions.

what we now characterize as a low order of civilization. They appear to have preserved some tradition of a migration into Egypt some centuries before from the North-east, which was probably well founded, as from Egyptian records we know that tribes kindred to the Hebrews did come down from that quarter and were absorbed into the population of the kingdom. The stories of Jacob and the other patriarchs must not be accepted as historical. They are at most only reminiscences of tribal movements, the far-off, mostly forgotten experience of a people taking on a personal form for the sake of prolonging the recollection. The most we can gather is that this nomadic tribe was drawn into Egypt in the track of the conquering Hyksos,* or Shepherd kings, who held possession of Lower Egypt from about 2100 to 1580 B. C. These were a people of kindred race to the Hebrews, and naturally offered them asylum. But when in 1580 the native Egyptians reconquered their country, the Hebrews were subjected to intolerable oppressions, from which they at length broke away and returned to a nomadic life. Whatever civilization they had gained in the early part of their stay in Egypt was crushed out in the subsequent years of their bondage, and they returned to the desert probably in as low a condition as they had left it. The god they worshiped was certainly a conception that could command no reverence in the modern world. The name given him, commonly written Jehovah, according to the philologists,

* Flavius Josephus, with a view to glorify his own race, makes the Hyksos themselves to be the ancestors of the Israelites.

is better written *Jahveh*. For psychological reasons as well, it is desirable to substitute that word. The term "Jehovah," from long association with Christian names of deity, suggests a conception which has no likeness to the early Hebrew idea, and obstructs a just criticism by interposing a term which has acquired an undue sanctity to our ears. The *Jahveh* of that early time was the twin brother of Moloch, a fierce and merciless being, reflecting the temper of a race of barbarians let loose from grinding oppression. Another name they had for him was "Shaddai," meaning, according to Kuenen, "The Violent One." Glorious as was the idea of divinity finally developed by this people, in those early centuries we may be sure they were no better off in respect of their religion than the tribes around them. They worshipped idols like the rest.* Their superstitions were of the grossest, their social life such as pertains to roving bands of semi-

* See Judges ii. 13 ; iii. 7 ; vi. 10, 25 seq. ; x. 6 ; 1 Sam. vii. 3, 4 ; xii. 10. Even so late as the time of Jeremiah, the prophet could say : "According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah !" Kuenen observes "This polytheism of the mass of the people cannot be regarded as a subsequent innovation ; on the contrary everything is in favor of its originality. In the accounts of the preceding centuries we never seek for it in vain. But—and this is decisive—the prophet's conception of *Jahveh's* being and of his relation to Israel is inexplicable, unless the god whom they now acknowledge to be the only one was at first only one of many gods."—"Religion of Israel," Vol. 1. p. 223. There is good reason to suppose that the Israelites in the early times worshiped Baal very generally. Among the indications I will mention only the fact that many proper names of that time are compounded with Baal, as Jerubbaal, Eshbaal, etc. In the transition from this idolatrous worship in after years the termination -baal was changed to "-bosheth," which means shame ; the new name becoming a memorial of the fact above stated.

savages. All they had to commend them was a leader. Moses is evidently to be reckoned among the world's heroes. He held his people together and took the first steps toward making of them a nation. It is not unlikely that he instituted some religious reforms and that the Ten Commandments, in some incipient shape, came from him. But after the death of Moses for a long time the tribe appears to have made small progress. The story of Joshua's wars is an enormous exaggeration. No such triumphal entry was made into Canaan, and no such ruthless and wholesale butchery ever took place as is there related.* On the contrary, from the death of Moses down

It is not to be overlooked that many of the images of which the prophets complain that the land was full even in their day were probably images of Jahveh. We know that upon the organization of the Northern kingdom the worship of Jahveh under the form of a young bull was perpetuated at Bethel and at Dan, where Jeroboam built temples in competition with that of Jerusalem, expressly because it was too far for the people to go to Jerusalem to worship. A gilded calf was set up in each of these temples, and the king declared to the people that this was their god "which brought them up out of the land of Egypt." This thing, we are told, "*became a sin,*" Mark now the reason given why this worship became a sin. It was not a sin *per se* in the reckoning of the writer of Kings, it would seem. It "*became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one even unto Dan*" (too far from Jerusalem), and because the king made priests of some "who were not of the sons of Levi." (1 Kings xii. 28, seq. Compare Hosea viii. 5, 6.) Referring to these gilded images of Jahveh, Hosea says: "They speak (pray) to them, *sacrificing men they kiss calves*"; from which it is only too plain that the custom of human sacrifices to Jahveh held on down to his day (about 800 B. C.). These facts afford the best indications of what the style of worship was in earlier times, which we may be sure becomes more crude and heathenish the further we go back from the days of Hosea.

*The evidence of this is conclusive, and the fact will be more readily admitted when we come to take into consideration the late origin of the book

to Saul, the Hebrews were in a state of anarchy and in peril of utter extermination at each other's hands. They divided into numerous tribes, having the same incoherency that we observe among so many tribes of wild Indians, and committing upon each other the same heartless atrocities. The legends left of this period have a much better basis of fact than those concerning the Mosaic and earlier ages, and no one can read them as they stand in the Book of Judges without getting some impression of the miserable state in which the Hebrews were then existing. Their low condition is so obvious that it has been customary to regard this as a period of decadence, into which the people were suffered to fall on account of their sins. Possibly there had been some decline, but there is not adequate reason to suppose they had ever been much better off. They were the same roving, bloody-handed bandits from the first. Many republicans have been gratified with the recorded antipathy of the people of that age toward kingly rule; but the fact is they were in such a state of dissension that they could not unite under one head. Occasionally a chief of some tribe would acquire sufficient prestige to bring under his direction one or two other tribes and do something notable, leaving a name of Joshua. For the present it will suffice to remind the reader that Israel was not at that time, nor for long after, a nation, united and prepared for such a conquest. What is more, these very towns which Joshua is said to have destroyed, and these very tribes which he exterminated, are shortly after none the worse for it, and in fact prove quite too strong to be exterminated again—Judges i. 17; iv. v.; x. 3-5. Compare Num. xxi. 1-3, with Josh. xii. 14.

for valor ; as in the case of Gideon and of Deborah, but the remaining tribes would interpose their jealousies and treacheries to prevent any conclusive triumph out of which the unification of Israel might have become possible.

Now through all this obscure period the development of the Hebrew religion must have been about as slow as the development of the commonwealth. We may be sure, on the one hand, that no elaborate ritual was formed, and, on the other, that no refined morality was taught. A class of prophets sprung up who combined zeal for Jahveh with a mercilessness toward the Canaanites, the very thought of which makes the blood run cold. Their chief office seems to have been to fire the people up to conflicts with their neighbors. They performed the simple functions of priests—functions which bore no resemblance to the duties of the priesthood afterwards laid down in the Pentateuch—consisting largely in the care of a great fetich called the Ark. About this fetich the superstitions of the people gathered for centuries. Its presence in battle had the magical power of giving victory to Hebrew arms ; or, if the fortunes of war proved adverse, and the ark fell into the hands of the enemy, it wrought such havoc among them that they were glad to bring it back. A shocking disregard of the humane sentiments on the part of Jahveh and his people characterizes the legends relating to that time. Thus we have the story that once when the Philistines were returning the captured ark to the Israelites, the people of a certain town received it with too familiar an affection, venturing to raise the lid and look into it. For this fault fifty thousand of them—or, to be

exact, fifty thousand and seventy—were smitten dead by the hand of Jahveh himself.* The best servant of Jahveh, as in all savage races the best servant of the tribal god, is he who kills the most of the worshipers of some other god. The trouble with Saul in the eyes of Samuel, the prophet of Jahveh, was that he was not sufficiently possessed with the passion of exterminating the neighboring tribes.†

Now this is precisely the spirit we should naturally expect to find in the religion of a primitive people, just such a spirit as characterizes the beginnings of any nation. A people's god at first pertains to that people alone. Other tribes have other gods, and between these rival divinities there are jealousies and bitter hatreds. The religious chieftain who has at heart the honor of his god will find his piety prompting him to attack his neighbors even when political considerations might counsel peace. Thus the "spiritual power," the priesthood, in a rude community is apt to be the most belligerent of all;‡ and so we find it to have been with the Hebrews.

* 1 Sam. vi. 19. Compare 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7.

† This sufficiently appears from the account of the prophet's withdrawal from the king (1 Sam. xv.). Saul conquered the Amalekites with great slaughter, but spared Agag the king, the cattle, sheep, &c. whereat Samuel was incensed and furiously berated him. Finally he said, "Bring ye hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." In all humility "Agag came unto him delicately, and said, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past;'" it is time to have an end of bloodshed. The account concludes: "*And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Jahveh in Gilgal.*"

‡ This is true in a sense of communities not so very rude. Religious wars hold on down into the present age. Sectarian feuds are still about the bitterest, and are nursed by the spiritual power. The opposing pulpits "show fight" when the congregations are peaceful to the point of somnolence.

However, he failed to satisfy the religious zealots, it is evident that Saul obtained a political ascendancy over the dissentient tribes, and did the first substantial work after Moses for the founding of a Hebrew nation. His fame is obscured by the evident ill-will of the sacerdotal party, which transferred its admiration to a more unscrupulous man of blood who became his successor. David closely filled the prophetic ideal of a leader, and by a series of sanguinary wars succeeded in establishing himself as a veritable king. At his hand the tribes round about, one after another, came to grief, the dominion of Israel was extended in all directions, Jebus, the site of Jerusalem and the last stronghold of the Canaanites, was besieged and taken, and there the victorious chieftain established his seat of government. Such distinguished success in arms threw a glamor around this man's name which to this day has made him pass for what he was not. He has been made out a saint, and credited with writing the book of *Psalms*, the most spiritual part of the Old Testament, and indeed of the whole Bible; and even the gospel writers were anxious to make it appear that Jesus was descended in direct line from him. But, as we see him, David was only another barbarian. He suited, in most respects the religious leaders of his tribe, but he suited them because of his wholesale butcheries and most abominable cruelties.* Not from such a man nor in an age which

* Here is the record of his treatment of prisoners of war. He had captured the city of Rabbah, the Ammonite capital, "and he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln (*i.e.* roasted them alive); and thus he did unto all the cities of the children of Ammon." 1 Sam. xii. 31.

delighted in such a man did there spring the sweet pieties of the Psalms, or the lofty moralities of the Pentateuch. Down to David's time, we are not even yet at the age of Hebrew literature. Not for two hundred years yet was any book of the Bible written. Legends and fragments of narrative only, began to take literary form. Deborah's song* and other legends of the book of *Judges*, and a prophetic utterance of mingled blessing and cursing on the twelve tribes, put into the mouth of Jacob,† date from David's reign, or a little before, and during his reign, or not long after, some narrative or legendary books appeared which are no longer extant, the Book of Jasher, the Book of the Wars of Jahveh, before referred to, and possibly a few others. Thus desperately poor was Hebrew literature even in the days of Solomon, who came to the throne in 1018 B. C.

Solomon inherited a kingdom and peace, for his father had conquered both and so ruthlessly treated the vanquished that they could scarcely lift the sword again. He set himself therefore to build a city and gather about him the luxuries of the east. Neither the splendors nor the dissipations of this monarch probably ever reached anything like the pitch which the descriptions would have us think, nor is there any good reason to suppose him possessed of that unequaled wisdom with which he has been credited. It is unlikely that he ever busied himself in literary pursuits, and it is tolerably certain

* Judges v.

† Gen. xlix.

that there is no word of the Bible that he ever wrote. I have thought more of the book since I found that out, for it always seemed to me that a man reputed to have seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines was not a suitable vehicle of the Holy Ghost, or, to put it in other words, was not in a position to teach morals to this modern world. But, as we very well know, the old writers never let a story suffer for want of strength, and, for the sake of round numbers, would think nothing of throwing in a couple or six hundred women in a case like this.

The enthusiasms of war united the people under Saul and David, and the old feuds slumbered through Solomon's reign, but only to break out afresh at the news of his death. The northern portion of the kingdom, composed of the most turbulent tribes, revolted. Thenceforth the stream of Hebrew history flows in two channels for two hundred and fifty-nine years, when the Northern kingdom passes out of existence. These two and a half centuries form a most eventful period, as they are marked by invasions from the East, the mighty empire of Assyria having risen to supreme power in Asia. In various ways the situation resulted in developing wonderfully the genius of the people. The necessities of defence stirred them to a noble patriotism. The vision of the thinkers was widened, and the peril of the nation moved the prophetic spirit to a lofty seriousness. The first utterances of this age of prophecy have not been preserved to us, except in uncertain fragments, and the record of the time is largely encumbered with legend. But about the beginning of the

eighth century B. C. the prophets begin to write out their words, and then appear in their completed form the oldest books of the Bible, bearing the names of *Amos* and *Hosea*. At this point we are five hundred years from Moses and the so-called books of Moses are not yet written. Here and there a fragment of tradition had been put in writing which was finally embodied in the Pentateuch, but the composition of those books with their elaborate legal regulations was far off in the future. This is the point at which the new criticism has reversed the old theory concerning the relative age of the various parts of the Bible. It has until recently been taken for granted that the books were earliest written which refer to the earliest time; a conclusion which no more follows in the case of Hebrew than in the case of English books. We might as well suppose that since Tennyson's Idyls treat of King Arthur, and Hume's History treats of James and Charles and later rulers, therefore the Idyls must have been written before Hume.

But to adhere for the present to our historical sketch, which must form the basis of our judgment on the age of the books. Upon the division of the people after the death of Solomon, numerous kings, more or less barbarian, followed each other in rapid succession on the throne of the Northern kingdom. Some of these fell into the ways of Solomon and encouraged the worship of foreign gods. It would seem that the ten tribes in the beginning of their separate existence were more inclined to *monola-*

*try** than were the people of Judah, for from the North came the first indignant protest against the service of other gods than Jahveh. Elijah and Elisha are the names with which it is associated. These men wrote no books, they contented themselves with smiting the land with the rod of their mouth. They are enveloped in tales of marvel and we see them but dimly. But we see enough to know that they stood out stoutly for the exclusive worship of Jahveh. They are representatives of the national religion in its best estate at that time. They freely admitted that there were other gods beside Jahveh.† In their way they were fierce and cruel, after the spirit of their time, yet not without their noble points of character. Elijah attained an extraordinary renown, and has remained a conspicuous, half-mythical personage to the present time. The legend has it that he went off to heaven in a chariot of fire, and the superstition has been current for thousands of years that he now and then comes back again.‡ All this indicates that a considerable period in-

* A convenient word to indicate the *worship* of one god. The distinction between idolatry and monotheism is to be carefully marked, as the latter was reached only by struggling up through the former. Originally the Hebrews, in common with surrounding tribes, worshiped many gods. Afterwards and for many centuries their religious leaders, while acknowledging the existence of other gods, taught that Israel should worship Jahveh alone. This was the stage of idolatry. Finally came by the voice of the greatest prophets the declaration that Jahveh was the one and only God, all other objects of religious adoration being nothing but phantoms of superstitious imaginations. All this was monotheism.

† 1 Kings xx. 23; 2 Kings i. 3; xvii. 29-38.

‡ See Malachi iv. 5; Matt. xi. 14, and the legend of the Wandering Jew.

tervened between Elijah's death and the writing of the book of Kings, in which his career is sketched. This intervening time was a period of great mental activity, of moral and religious progress, and so in the record we doubtless have the rough character of these first great prophets somewhat toned down, but still we can see in the picture the ineffaceable traits of the primitive barbarian. The story of the great miracle test with the prophets of Baal, however little foundation of fact there may be in it, shows us the spirit of the man. He has four hundred and fifty of these priests in his power, and proposes to them that they call down fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice. He taunts them with their failure in a sufficiently brutal manner, and when he has abused them in this way to his heart's content, he takes them aside and with his own hand kills every one of them.* This is the sort of person the foremost prophet was even so late as fifty years after the death of Solomon. We are reminded of Samuel hewing Agag to pieces "before the face of Jahveh in Gilgal." We must wait for different style of men from these before we can have the moral precepts which are scattered through the Pentateuch.

Gradually a fairer spirit is developed. The discipline of those trying years tells upon the Hebrew mind. In the next century after Elijah we see the manifestation of nobler things. Amos in the Southern kingdom, and Hosea in the Northern, and, after them, Isaiah and Micah, mark the arrival of the classic period of Hebrew literature.

* 1 Kings xviii. 40.

Then for the first time it became possible for some prophet to write the nucleus of what became by successive increments and emendations the so-called books of Moses. That is to say, some time in this century—the eighth B.C.—what are called the prophetic narratives (in distinction from the priestly or sacerdotal) now contained in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and also in Joshua, Samuel and Kings, appeared in the primitive form. These narratives have undergone several redactions by different hands, but still retain, no doubt, much of their original character.

We have reached now a period of which we have some authentic account from men who lived in the time of which they wrote, and henceforward there is agreement among the critics as to the general course of history. Concerning the preceding centuries which I have hastily sketched, much is necessarily matter of inference; but from traditions which bear all the marks of validity we have gathered facts, culled almost at random out of a multitude that point in the same way, which authorize a reconsideration of the whole question touching the date and authorship of the Old Testament books.

This cursory statement of the ground taken by the new school of criticism has seemed necessary to make intelligible the more specific application of its theory which will be made in the following lectures. This theory it will be observed, involves the idea that the Hebrew literature was an evolution and not a miracle. It would seem that, even in the absence of evidence, this idea ought

to commend itself to every reasonable mind. But the evidence in support of it is of the strongest. If we admit the old view of the relative age of the books, facts remain, recorded in the books themselves, which still show an increasing barbarism as we go back. The course of Joshua, of Samuel and Saul toward the Canaanites, the atrocities of David, the debaucheries of Solomon, contrast so vividly with the lives of Jeremiah and his fellow prophets, that we instinctively revolt at any classification which sets these men in one category. If then a moral and religious progress is shown even from the books whose authors had no idea of such progress, who supposed that the golden age was behind them, it may certainly be taken as an established fact. But, this fact once established, the old theory in regard to the age of these books becomes untenable. It will not do any longer to place the composition of an elaborated system of public worship like *Leviticus*, or a highly spiritual presentation of the moral law like *Deuteronomy*, at the beginning. If there was a progressive development of the true religion in Israel, as is sufficiently indicated by the facts above adduced, then these writings must have had their place in a progressive order, and the making of the Bible becomes intelligible.

And it is to be borne in mind that there is the strongest possible *presumption* that the literature of this people was a natural growth. This is the view that ought to be taken until positive proof to the contrary is presented. No such proof ever has been or ever can be offered. I

have given some reasons to show that Moses could never have written the Pentateuch, and I think the case is established as well as the proof of a negative ever can be. But it needs now to say that no shred of proof has ever been offered to show that Moses *did* write the Pentateuch. Such an authorship has simply been assumed in an uncritical age for a purpose, which I shall explain by and by, and perpetuated by tradition. Now that the scientific study of history has fixed certain canons of judgment in such a matter, this unsupported assumption must give way. And with it must go the whole conception of a thoroughly developed system of religion being given outright to a primitive people. The notion that the Hebrews were monotheists from the days of Moses, having a pure and exalted worship, is akin to the fallacy that the wild Indians worship one Great Spirit. As has been truly said of our Indians, so we may say of the Hebrews of the time of the exodus and for centuries afterwards, their religion was only a form of demonology. They believed in the gods of the other nations as well as in their own Jahveh, all of whom were blood-thirsty, treacherous and terrible. Their preference for Jahveh lay in the fancy that he was the most terrible of all, El Shaddai, the Mighty, the Violent One. This was the beginning, and we may well believe it took six centuries to reach the spiritual and majestic utterances of Isaiah. Progress in the lower stages of culture is always slow, and it is in accordance with the observed facts of evolution everywhere that five of these six centuries were occupied in passing out of barbarism.

SECOND LECTURE.

THE AGE OF PROPHECY.

IT has become an accepted principle with well-informed people that every excellent thing is the result of growth. Nations rise to political power through slow stages of development. Civilization and religion rise out of the primitive savagery through age-long ascending gradations. History teaches nothing so clearly as this. And there is the strongest presumption that the true history of Israel forms no exception. It is fair to assume that the Hebrews began their career in a low stage of barbarism, just as did the English, the French, the Greeks, the Romans, and every other ancient and modern people. Starting out with this view I hastily sketched in the preceding lecture the history of Israel down to the time of the great prophets, guided by the indications of the legends concerning the earlier ages. These legends afford strong confirmation of the view, in itself reasonable, that this people arose in the process of centuries from a wild tribe of the desert, and that its noble religion was a growth from the lowest form of idolatry. The highest authority on the subject assures us that *it is*

impossible to show that we have any writing of this people produced before the year 800 B. C. In the century following this date some efforts were made to gather up the floating traditions relating to early times and mould them into a connected narrative. Now we must know that writers of history of that age and race did not do their work in the manner of modern historians. They had no idea of tracing the *development* of customs, institutions, ideas of government or of religion. Their stock of historical material consisted of tales, more or less legendary, which had passed from mouth to mouth for hundreds of years, some of them possibly for a thousand years. The longer these stories had been preserved in this way the more they had grown in marvels, creating an impression that in the early time Jahveh had manifested himself* much more freely on behalf of his people. Thus the old time came to be thought the best time, the time when God mixed with men and made known his will. It was the idea of the writers of the legal and historical

* It is always to be observed that the miraculous element in religious history requires for its evolution a vista of past time. A clearly supernatural event has never yet been recorded by competent eye-witnesses. Such transactions are always more or less remote from the time of the person who narrates them. The Bible books themselves are a conspicuous illustration of this. The men who write of what is passing under their own observation, though they are, in the spirit of their time, of the opinion that a miracle is as likely to happen as anything, give us generally a narration of purely natural events; as, for instance, Ezra, Nehemiah, Jeremiah. Only those who undertake to relate what happened before their day, embellish their accounts with miracles. This is a very important consideration in handling this troublesome question, as it goes far to explain the currency of such stories and at the same time saves the writers from the charge of inventing them. The miracle-stories were found ready-made.

books to make the highly developed religion of their time date back from the very beginnings of the Hebrew race. This was a perfectly honest intention, although it was to violate the whole philosophy of history. But fortunately it was impossible to carry it out. The traditions many of them did not fit well into such a scheme, and now 2500 years after the work was done, they serve to rectify our judgment of the whole representation. We find enough of those early recollections to show that the Hebrews were a rude and barbarous race at the outset and long after their migration to Canaan; that they were at first fetich-worshippers,* reverencing stones and trees; afterwards fire-worshippers;† that they believed in many gods of whom Jahveh was the chief;‡ that they worshipped him under the form of a bull;§ that the custom was

* See Gen. xxviii. 18, and xxxv. 14, where it is said Jacob "Set up a pillar of stone, and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon." See also Ex. xv. 25; Deut. xvi. 21; Josh. iv. 7; xv. 6; xviii. 17; xxiv. 26, 27; Judges, ix. 5; 1 Sam. vi. 19; vii. 12. Jahveh is called the "stone of Israel" (Gen. xlix. 24) not in metaphor but through the survival in speech of a reminiscence of the original stone worship.

† See Exodus iii. 2; xix. 18. The warnings against the fire-worship (Lev. xviii. 21; Deut. xviii. 19; 2 Kings xvii. 17) have no point unless even as late as the time of these writings the people were still given to that worship.

‡ See Ex. xxii. 28; xxiii. 24, 32; Deut. x. 17, *et passim*.

§ See note on page 19. The worship of the golden calf in the desert of Sinai (Ex. xxxii.) if a correct tradition, and there seems no reason to doubt it, was certainly not the worship of a strange god, but of Jahveh himself, under a form which was persistent in Israel, holding on for five-hundred years and more. The young bull was proclaimed as a representation of the god "which brought thee out of the land of Egypt," and this is the very designation by which Jahveh is known. There was no intent in this business to depart from the worship of the god of Israel, and the only rea-

long prevalent among them of offering human sacrifices.* Thus truth comes out, and we are bound to suppose that the theory of the writers of these histories is a mistaken one; that they carried back into the age of Moses ideas and institutions which belonged to an age six or seven hundred years after Moses.

This being the case it is desirable first to consider the condition of Israel at the time of the great prophets. For this purpose we have some reliable data in the writings of the prophets themselves, and in the historical books written during this period.

The age of the prophets was subsequent to the disruption of the kingdom at the death of Solomon. For, though Moses is loosely called a prophet, he was without that quality of inspiration by which this order is distinguished in history. The ancient races all had their oracles of more or less repute, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, or what-

sonable explanation of such an occurrence and of its repetition all through the early history of this people is to suppose that it was once their accepted mode of worship. Of this the horns of the altar are a relic; also the twelve brazen bulls supporting the molten sea in the temple. See further 1 Kings xii. 28, 32; 2 Kings x. 29; Ps. lxvii. 39; Hosea x. 5; xiii. 2; Jer. lii. 20.

* The prophet Micah could not have said with any pertinency :

“Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul!”

if such things were not done in his time. And tradition makes Jahveh command Abraham to make a burnt offering of his son. (Gen. xxii. 2.) Hosea charges (xiii. 2) against the Ephraimites that “sacrificing men, they kiss calves.” (Kuenen’s version). David makes an offering to Jahveh of seven of Saul’s sons. (2 Sam. xxi. 1-14.) Saul proposes to sacrifice his own son. (1 Sam. xv. 44.) See also Samuel’s offering of Agag (1 Sam. xv. 33) and Jephthah’s immolation of his own daughter. (Judges xi.) For further references to this matter see Lev. xviii. 21; 2 Kings xviii. 17; Jer. xix. 5.

ever we choose to call them, to whom the people resorted for light on dark questions. "Seers" these persons were called among the Israelites down to the time of Samuel, when, we are told, some of them had come to be called prophets. The nobler title suited the advance they had made from vulgar soothsaying to be the leaders of the people and the counselors of kings. This advance we may be sure was slow, and the earliest prophets were of necessity superstitious, bloody-handed men. No written law or code of morals then existed. A few orally transmitted regulations had come down from Moses, but as yet there was no instituted form of religion or education. Samuel's "school of the prophets" was a school only in the sense of being an assemblage, as we say "a school of fishes." Jahveh was worshiped, but only as one of many gods, worshiped with cruel and bloody rites, and occasionally at least with human sacrifices.

We find in Samuel small traces of that high moral quality which draws us to the great prophets of the eighth century. A far finer spirit is marked in Nathan who hesitated not to rebuke King David for his sins, but of him we see only a little. The prosperous days of the kingdom were ripening and deepening the spirit of prophecy, but its hour of utterance was not yet. David's inhumanities and Solomon's voluptuousness met with no such denunciations as they would have received if an Isaiah or a Jeremiah had lived in those days. On the contrary we have related to us the splendor of that period, and it remained ever after a golden age in the imagina-

tion of Israel. It belonged to the theory of the prophets that the outward success of the two great monarchs arose from fidelity to the service of Jahveh ; and in accordance with that theory as little is said of their lapses as possible, while detailed accounts are furnished of their glorious achievements. So ever afterward the bright picture of this triumphal period served as a back-ground against which to set the misfortunes which came upon Ephraim and Judah, as the prophets thought, on account of their sins. When, after Solomon, the tribes which had been held together by a strong arm flew asunder and disasters thickened upon the divided kingdoms, the real career of prophecy began. Indeed it was a prophet* who instigated the rebellion of the ten tribes, and that movement was probably in part a revulsion from the too liberal style of Solomon's religion. Such cordiality to all manner of gods would, it was feared, if continued through another reign, result in the destruction of all that was distinctive in the religion of Israel. The revolted tribes set out with a more exclusive worship of Jahveh. Jeroboam built up the sacred places and established two national temples, one in the north and one in the south of the kingdom. In these he placed a gilt image of a bull to represent Jahveh, so reproducing the old style of worship in vogue before the time of David. What thought those fathers of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, of this bull worship ? We may not say with absolute assurance, but there is certainly nothing to show that they disapproved of it. Their war

* Ahijah ; see 1 Kings xi. 29, seq.

was against other gods and the images of other gods. We do not find that they had anything to say against these images of Jahveh. And, if they had really reckoned it a sin to worship the bulls, it is hardly possible that we should be without some word of theirs in denunciation of the practice which was then certainly in full force. We may therefore conclude without much doubt that these prophets found nothing reprehensible in worshipping Jahveh under the form of a bull. Accustomed to it from childhood, it probably never struck them as other than the proper thing.

At all events if these men had ever heard of the numerous injunctions in the Pentateuch concerning the use of graven images, they could never have kept silence so long as those carved and gilded bulls held their places in the temples of Javeh. But in their day Moses had not yet written his books. Conservative as they were in religion, a rash revolutionary spirit in the conduct of affairs continued to mark the career of the ten tribes through their separate existence, involving much civil strife and frequent wars with more powerful neighbors. They were not without some noble prophets, but the popular religion seems never to have made among them much advancement. They clung to their custom of representing Jahveh by images. Some of the kings, following the examples of Solomon, introduced the worship of foreign gods to please their foreign wives, and also doubtless to gratify their subjects. The better class of prophets, while making no objection to the images of Jahveh, protested vigor-

ously against the foreign gods, and were in almost constant collision with the government. And as the kingdom began to decline towards the close of the eighth century, the conviction deepened that it was because of the unfaithfulness of the people to their God. And this judgment was confirmed when in 719 B. C. the Assyrians put an end to the kingdom of Ephraim. The oldest record of the period is written by one who had passed this judgment, and he has his regular formula for denouncing the kings whose actions he does not approve: they "walked in the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." But most likely these kings were in accord with a majority of their subjects. As for Jeroboam, his specific sins do not come out, and it is not improbable that if we knew more of him we should think him a very decent man for the time. Certainly in the narratives connected with this king nothing appears of such a very heinous character, unless it be on the part of Jahveh himself, who commits some outrageous injustices, and acts generally in a way unbecoming a god.* The writer judges the kings of Judah in the same manner. He seems to assume that the course of religion is altogether in the hands of the rulers, whereas, then as now, governments no doubt fairly reflected the religious life of the people. Nations are not made righteous by a word in the constitution or in a royal decree. We must not too readily acquiesce in the verdict he passes upon these two lines of monarchs. At least condemnation ought to be generally

* 1 Kings xiii, xiv,

transferred from the rulers to the people at large. The prophets of the ninth and tenth centuries B. C. were only advocates of Jahveh in preference to the other gods, whose idols, in Judah at any rate, were everywhere.

It was in the eighth century that the first of the great prophets arose, and we are at once struck with this feature about them: they were writers, and not merely talkers. We observe, in regard to their teaching, that these prophets, at least some of them, differ from their predecessors in absolutely refusing to admit that there are other gods beside Jahveh. Jahveh is the maker of heaven and earth, not merely the God of Israel. It is he that all the nations of the earth ought to worship. Such claims never were made before. In the highest strains of their minstrelsy the people had only sung the praise of Jahveh as one "above all gods," a being more powerful than the others. Search the earlier writings as closely as you may, you will find no sign of any more advanced conception than this. Throughout, the existence of other gods is taken for granted; the people are warned not to have anything to do with them; Jahveh is jealous of them; they seem to be nearly always getting the better of him; their reality is as assured as his. Solomon had amply provided for the worship of all the other gods known to the people when he built the temple to Jahveh; and though he may have carried this liberality to a rather extreme degree, he seems not to have been at the time severely censured.* We know of the subsequent kings that

* 1 Kings xi. 6,

very many of them were worshipers of other gods, one of them,* at least, sacrificing his own child to Moloch, which could only have been the case on the supposition that the people generally were in the same way. None of this time was the worship of Jahveh given up, but he shared with the others in the offerings of the people. Even when at any period before the eighth century the service of other gods was excluded, it was never on the ground that those gods were nonentities. It was only because Jahveh was more powerful, or because Israel was under more special obligations to him. This was in fact the general view—Jahveh was Israel's God, and Israel ought to serve him, just as every nation ought to serve its own deity. Thus it was argued with the Amorites who had retaken a certain tract which Israel conquered in the early wars, that they ought to give it up, because Jahveh had once wrested it from Chemosh. The argument is decidedly one-sided, but it shows how the people regarded the gods of other nations. They said: "The God of Israel dispossessed the Amorites of this land, and gave it to his people Israel. Wilt thou not possess what Chemosh, thy god, giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever Jahveh drives out from before us, them will we possess."† This is an incident of the period of the Judges, but there is every reason to believe that similar notions regarding the reality and comparative power of other gods held on to a late day. We have it related, for instance, that when the kings Jehoram and Jehoshaphat marched together

* Ahaz. See 2 Kings xvi, 3.

† Judges xi. 23, 24,

upon Moab, and were in a fair way to reduce the capital of that heathen land, the king of Moab, in his extremity, sacrificed his son and heir to Chemosh; whereupon the might of that god was revealed, and Israel, though accompanied by the prophet Elisha, who wrought the most stupendous miracles, was forced to raise the siege.*

In this we see the original ideas of the people out of which they were slow to pass. The prophets proposed a radical innovation in thought when they declared that Jahveh was the only God. We may imagine that the preaching of this doctrine was rendered more acceptable, in that it tended to magnify the importance of Israel. At the same time it was a bold thing for anybody to say of Baal, Ashera, Astarte, Chemosh, and the rest of the divinities whose altars had been endowed by Solomon, and whose worship was celebrated alongside that of Jahveh in all the sacred places of the land, that they were nothing but names.

It is painfully evident, too, that these men were far ahead of their times. Why were the people so reluctant to renounce the worship of foreign gods? Why did they hold on so tenaciously to ceremonies which a strict Jahvism interdicted? Let me answer the latter question first, and, if I mistake not, the other will be answered. These ceremonies which came to be called heathenish were many of them originally associated with the worship of Jahveh. An early conception of him was as *light* and

* 2 Kings iii, 27.

fire, which survived in poetry, furnishing its most striking symbols. Thus Isaiah says ;*

“ The light of Israel shall be for a fire,
And his Holy One for a flame.”

“ The sinners in Zion are afraid,
Trembling seizeth the hypocrites ;
Who among us can dwell with a devouring fire ?
Who among us can dwell by a hearth always glowing ? ”

It is said that “ the Glory of Jahveh was like *devouring fire* on the top of Mount Sinai,”† so “ his angels appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ; the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed.”‡ In the desert “ Jahveh went before them in a cloud by day and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.”§ “ Thy God is a consuming fire,”|| says another with sufficient explicitness. This language is figurative with the writers, no doubt, but it points back to a time when it would have been simply literal. In those early days the worshipers of Jahveh offered their children to him, *i. e.*, to the flames. Nor is the fact to be overlooked that the burning of sacrifices, which is so constant a feature of the Hebrew ritual, points to a time when the flame that received the offering was identical with the god who was to be propitiated thereby.

As the religion of Israel advanced, this cruel and most inhuman rite was discountenanced in the Jahveh-worship. But the people had acquired a strong predilection for these fiery rites, and when they could no longer celebrate them in the service of their own God, they had but

* Isa. x. 17 ; xxxiii. 15.

§ Ex. xiii. 21.

† Ex. xxiv. 17.

|| Deut. iv. 24.

‡ Ex. iii. 2.

to fall in with the devotions of their neighbors, who, under the name of Melech, or Moloch, perpetuated in its literalness the idea that God is a devouring fire.

So we are able to understand, what else would be inexplicable, how it was that the prophets of the eighth century found it necessary to combat so strongly the disposition of the people to one form or another of fire-worship. It had the strength of what we may call an aboriginal tendency.

This method of explaining the *penchant* of the Israelites for Moloch will also account for their readiness to lapse into the service of Ashera, Milcom, Chemosh, *etc.* These orders of worship, however widely separated at last from Jahvism, were originally kindred. In the slow advance of the latter there were many who were drawn to the old ways.

I have already spoken of the bull-worship as persistent in Israel. This at first suggests Egypt as its source, but, as Kuenen shows, it is quite unlikely that the Israelites, immediately on leaving the land of their oppressors, would have taken up an Egyptian form of worship. For the customs of their enemies they would naturally have had a strong revulsion. This consideration is not, however, conclusive, for we know that races of slaves have taken kindly enough to the religion of their masters. But, when closely examined, the Hebrew custom appears to have been quite different from the Egyptian. The Egyptians worshiped *live* cattle. An image of a calf, though it were of gold, would have had no religious significance to

them. The real object of their adoration was the *principle of life*. On the contrary, the history of Israel affords no trace of this sort of worship. They simply required some image to represent Jahveh, and, for reasons which seemed to them adequate, they preferred the image of a bull.

Now there is every reason to suppose that the land was full of these images, and the Israelites seem never to have been without them. They were in the temple, "in the high places," everywhere. Nor was their use ever called in question, that we know of, down to the eighth century B.C. There occurs to you, no doubt, what is called the Second Commandment. "Thou shalt not make any graven image," &c.* But the oldest book we have containing the decalogue is of a later date (620 B.C.), as we shall see, and whatever we may conclude as to the other commandments, this one certainly Moses could never have given. Moses, the tradition has it, gave ten words, ten declarations, not commandments but *declarations*, and there are ten without this, counting as the first, "I am Jahveh, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."† The prohibition of graven images could not possibly have been in exist-

* Ex. xx. 4, 5, 6; Deut. v. 8, 9, 10.

† The expression *ten words* implies that these declarations were exceedingly brief; most of them doubtless originally shorter than they now stand, certainly those touching the Sabbath, reverence for parents, and covetousness. Suspicion is at once cast on the command in regard to graven images on account of its length, running through three verses and turning into a regular exhortation.

ence for the first five hundred years after Moses, for they were everywhere used without any apparent sense of impropriety.

A more important consideration is, what was the moral condition of the people? and what part did morality play in their religious obligations? If we may attribute the substance of the Ten Commandments to Moses, then the religion of Israel took a moral cast at the outset; and we can safely say that the worship of Jahveh was never accompanied by the lascivious rites which disgraced the temples of other gods at that time. There had been some progress from the barbarian age of the Judges, but still as late as the eighth century B. C. the moral status was very low. The sense had not been much developed of a connection between faithfulness to Jahveh and faithfulness to justice and truth. The notion had strengthened itself that the salvation of Israel was to be secured by making plenty of burnt offerings and keeping up a great show of public worship. But even for this public worship there existed no regulation from such competent authority as to secure uniformity. Much less was there any adequate enunciation of the idea that God is to be served by doing what is right.

In speaking of the prophets we are accustomed to think only of the few whose writings are left to us. But it is to be observed that the prophets, as a whole, were a very different class of men.* Instead of proclaiming the need of reform, they were only the mouth-pieces of public

* Jer. ii. 8; v. 13, 31; xxiii. 13, etc.

opinion, like the majority of religious teachers in every age. Only the great prophets whose works have been preserved appear to have had any interest in the purification of the people's faith and life. These set out with great earnestness to abolish idolatry in every shape, proclaiming Jahveh as the only God and insisting on moral purity in his worshipers. About the beginning of the eighth century B. C. this propaganda was fairly under way, and toward the close of the century it had made such progress in Judah that the king Hezekiah championed it so far as to undertake the forcible exclusion from the kingdom of every form of worship except that of Jahveh. Now it must be observed that practically the various modes of worship were then mixed up with the strictly Israelitish almost inextricably. Religion from the first has delighted to plant its altars on hill and mountain tops, thus to approach a little nearer heaven and breathe the pure, inspiring air. All over their rugged territory the Israelites had their "high places," consecrated to the offices of religion. To these sacred hills the adherents of other gods came also, and alongside Jahveh's altar arose other altars and symbols. Conspicuous among these was the representations of Ashera, repeatedly denounced in the prophecies, and there called in the common version "groves," an unfortunate rendering which gives no correct idea of the object. It appears to have been a rude form of "liberty-pole," made of a stunted tree, around which the service of this goddess was celebrated.

When Hezekiah undertook his task of excluding these

foreign gods it soon become apparent that it would be impossible to separate their worship from the worship of Jahveh in these "high places" without garrisoning every one of them with an army. Accordingly he resorted to a sweeping decree, abolishing the "high places" altogether, and making it unlawful even to worship Jahveh there.

Thus was inaugurated the first marked religious reformation in Israel, and we see it was of a violent, high-handed character. Jerusalem and all Judah were swept clean of idols, and worshipers were bidden to bring their offerings to the temple instead of making them in the "high places" where they had been wont to worship time out of mind. It was a decided revolution, but it was a revolution for which the people were not prepared; for when in a few years King Hezekiah died, and was succeeded by his son Manasseh, a boy of twelve, things went back again quite to their old shape. But the reform party had been victorious, if only for a short time, and they relaxed no effort to work out a more complete triumph. The writer of the books of Kings represents Manasseh as a terribly wicked man, but we ought to remember in reading the account of this struggle between the old and the new views that we have only one side of the story. It is fair to suppose that Manasseh was as conscientious as his father in the course which he pursued. But when religious controversies run high conscientiousness goes for little or nothing. The record paints him very black, nevertheless he managed to live and reign in Jerusalem most prosperously for fifty-five years. His son Amon

followed in much the same course for two years, when he was assassinated, as there is some reason to suspect, by an emissary of the reform party. Be that as it may, a deep plan was laid to capture the next king, Josiah, who commenced to reign when only eight years old. This plan was so ingenious, so successful, and so important in its consequences, that it needs to be stated at some length. Fifty-seven years of tribulation under the previous kings brought the reform party to see the necessity of agreement and co-operation to carry out a definite scheme. Hezekiah had pursued his course with sufficient energy, but when he had done with his image-breaking there was no authoritative religious code, no written law in existence by which things could be kept in order. It was proposed now to remedy this defect and to approach Josiah in a manner which should secure him and the nation after him to the exclusive service of Jahveh. It was necessary to the success of the plan that the chief actor in it should remain *incognito*, and so our curiosity is baffled in part, but enough is known to give a singular interest to this passage of religious history.

Let me say again that down to this time, 620 B. C., none of the so-called books of Moses existed. The most that Israel ever had from the hand of Moses was a brief compend of precepts, called the ten words or declarations, said to have been graven in stone, afterward expanded to the form of the Ten Commandments. In the course of the six or seven hundred years that elapsed since the death of Moses various short collections of moral

precepts and directions for feasts and other ceremonies had appeared, but they had never had about them an authoritative quality. Before the time of the kings people did, it is said, "what was right in their own eyes;"* and since the accession of the kings no one of them had issued a book of moral or ceremonial law. Hence the general confusion in regard to worship. There came now to be in the minds of priests and prophets a felt need of an authoritative Book of the Law; and it would suit their purpose to have it come from Moses himself.

Under these circumstances something occurs in religious circles which breaks the dull monotony of our history. It was found necessary to make some repairs in the temple at Jerusalem. Josiah sends his scribe Shaphan to Hilki'ah, the high priest, with an order to make up the amount received by the doorkeepers from the voluntary contributions of the people and hand it over to the men who were to have charge of the repairs. When the king's scribe had delivered these commands Hilki'ah made to him the extraordinary announcement that in overhauling some portion of the temple he had found the Book of the Law! So saying he handed him the book. Shaphan immediately read it, and then took it to the king and read it to him. It was a book that never had appeared before and it made the deepest impression upon the king. It was the communication of the law to Moses with full directions in religious matters, ostensibly from the mouth of Jahveh himself. King and court were

* Deut. xii. 8; Judges xvii. 6.

thrown into a state of great excitement, for the book was full of threats against the nation if ever it should be guilty of such practices as were then common in Judah. Five men of rank, among whom are Shaphan and Hilkihah, are commissioned to seek out an oracle and get the verdict of Jahveh whether, in accordance with the threats of the newly discovered book, Jerusalem would now be destroyed. They went to the prophetess Huldah. Whatever the response of the oracle may have been in regard to this question, the main point was definitely established that the book which Hilkihah had found was the law of Jahveh. This book, there is every reason to believe, is what is known to us as *Deuteronomy*.^{*} A few chapters were afterward added at the beginning and a few at the close; otherwise we have the same book that was first brought out in the peculiar fashion just described. It is needless to say that the book was written by some one of the prophets connected with the temple, and hidden there on purpose to be found and made the basis of a religious revolution. It was written as though from Moses himself, and in its substance and style is a work that scarcely any prophet need have been ashamed of. But, to carry out the purpose for which it was written, of course the real authorship had to be kept beyond all possible discovery.

As this view of the origin of Deuteronomy diverges widely from the generally received opinion, and as this is the first instance, taking the books in the order of their

^{*} Chap. iv. 44—xxvi. and xxviii.

date according to the new chronology, in which a material divergence has been rendered necessary, the reasoning on which it rests is here presented as fully as space will allow. As Hilkiash and his manuscript are both dust and ashes, I hope no one will require me to produce either of them to make out the case. Some there are—but they will neither hear my words nor read them—who will make equally hard terms. The evidence is circumstantial, inferential, but it is such, I think, as in a court of justice would be reckoned conclusive.

In the first place it is obvious that the “book of the law” which was read before Hilkiash; and then again before Josiah the same day, and afterward to the people in the temple, could not have been the whole Pentateuch, nor any longer writing than above indicated. In fact it would appear from the description to be somewhat shorter. But we have no intimations in the writings of the prophets of this century that the other Mosaic books were in existence. Deuteronomy, however, the prophets subsequent to 620 B. C. are acquainted with. Its precepts are precisely those which are carried out by Josiah. The body of the book here assumed to be the “book of the law” found in the temple, accords perfectly with the description given of that book. Moreover there are many facts which are absolutely inexplicable on any other supposition. Is it to be supposed that Israel, once having had a book of Moses, could have so completely lost it that, upon the accidental recovery of a copy, the contents prove to be something they never heard of before as having come from Moses? Is it pos-

sible that any preceding generation had this book which strictly forbids the recognition of any god but Jahveh, and directs that the celebration of his worship be restricted to one place, the temple, and conducted without the use of images, when in every century back to the earliest times the people had worshiped in the "high places," and even the prophets until recently had acknowledged that there were other gods, and acquiesced in the use of images of Jahveh ?

But what is more, this book is a prophetic discourse, pitched in the same key and obviously intended to meet the wants of the same time as the writings which were certainly produced in this period. The preaching of Deuteronomy is scarcely to be distinguished from that of Jeremiah, except that the preacher in the first case is constantly assumed to be Moses. But this is only a literary artifice which from first to last was practised by Jewish writers, the great mass of their literature of both Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha being credited, as we shall see, to persons who had no hand in writing it. Prof. Robertson Smith in his noble article in the ninth edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica"—and to the position of this orthodox teacher I especially call the attention of any who think I am coming to rash conclusions—Prof. Smith speaking of Deuteronomy says: "The whole theological stand-point of the book agrees exactly with the period of prophetic literature, and gives the highest and most spiritual view of the law, * * which cannot be placed at the beginning of the theocratic develop-

ment without making the whole history unintelligible. Beyond doubt the book is a prophetic legislative programme; and if the author put his work in the mouth of Moses, instead of giving it, with Ezekiel, a directly prophetic form, he did so, not in pious fraud, but simply because his object was, not to give a new law but to expound and develop Mosaic principles in relation to new needs." These last words are less clear than they should be; the object of Deuteronomy, I should say, was not to invent new regulations, but to give the authority of law, under the seal of Moses, to regulations already formulated and urged by the prophets.

The opportunity of forecasting events afforded to the writer who puts his words into the mouth of a man that lived seven hundred years before, is alluring, but at the same time it cannot be indulged in specifically without throwing suspicion upon the claim of antiquity. The Deuteronomist, wise enough to see this, makes his vaticinations of a general character, and yet they continually betray the *post eventum* writer. He makes threats of calamities for national sin which are evidently drawn from the actual experience of the nation. He counsels for exigencies which belong not to the age of Moses or an immediately subsequent time, but to the age of Josiah. A tradition in the book of Judges has it that Samuel, by divine direction, strongly discountenanced the establishment of a monarchy; but here we have Moses making special provision for such an event, and even going to the length of specifying the qualities a monarch should not

have. In making out this specification he evidently has Solomon in mind and takes advantage of his prophetic attitude to give that king—then in his grave more than three hundred and fifty years—a gentle raking down.* He then proceeds to give this description of the good king which is specially designed for Josiah: “And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Jahveh, his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them.”†

Other equally palpable proofs that this book cannot be older than the latter part of the seventh century might be furnished, but these the careful reader will find from a fresh examination of the book itself.

We now recur to the transaction by which Deuteronomy was brought out.

The whole proceeding was a piece of jesuitry which could not be approved in these days. But there has been

* “When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me: thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.”—Deut. xvii. 14-17.

† Deut. xvii. 18, 19.

many an instance since that time when the interests of civilization and of religion turned upon the disposition of a king, and when it has been judged expedient to bring over the ruling power by as sheer a trick as this which was played upon Josiah. The elevated moral tone of the book of Deuteronomy precludes the thought that the writer could have been made use of in what would appear to him an improper transaction. But writing in the name of some ancient worthy was always in Israel a favorite and well-accredited method of giving weight to one's words, and the greater part of the Bible was so written. The method of publication only served to support the assumption of antiquity. We must remember that these events did not happen in these days of printing-presses and publishing-houses, nor in this part of the world.

Josiah was now entirely in the hands of the Mosaic party. He inaugurated at once the most sweeping revolution that had ever been seen in Israel. He tore up idolatry root and branch; demolished the temples, cut down the Ashera-symbols—*liberty-poles*, I have called them, which in a new sense may not be a bad designation, as Ashera was an unchaste goddess and her priestesses sold themselves in the temples marked by these symbols—burned the images and heaped defilement upon the altars of all foreign gods; even swept away the “high places” consecrated to Jahveh, compelling the priests of these places to come to Jerusalem and take service where the purity of their worship could be better looked after. Not content with this, he went into the neighboring cities of Samaria and applied the same coercive measures there

in the cause of Jahveh. Samaria, the former kingdom of the ten tribes, had been now a hundred years a province of Assyria, and Josiah's head was evidently turned or he would not have ventured upon the territory of his powerful neighbor. He had become imbued with the doctrine of Deuteronomy that scrupulous fidelity to the service of Jahveh will insure worldly success, and that the nation of Israel by walking in his statutes must walk to greatness. No previous king had exhibited such faithfulness as Josiah. Surely Jahveh would bring back again to him the former glories of David. The prophetic vision of destruction for Jerusalem which had been held up through the previous reigns, was withdrawn, and prophets and people together saw the future in rose color. Nothing but good could happen to the good king Josiah.

Now let us see what did happen before long. In the year, 608 B. C. the Egyptian king, Necho, took it into his head, while Nineveh was being besieged by the Medes and Babylonians, to seize the Assyrian possessions in Syria and Palestine. He had no intention of attacking Jerusalem, but the extension of Egyptian power in that direction was of course perilous to the little kingdom of Judah. So Josiah, confident that the aid of Jahveh will make up for any disparity of numbers* marches out to oppose the

* "If ye will diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love Jahveh your god, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him, then will Jahveh drive out all the nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. There shall no man be able to stand before you."—Deut. xi. 22, 23, 25. "One man of you shall chase a thousand; for Jahveh, your god, he it is that fighteth for you as he hath promised you,"—Josh. xxiii. 10. See also Deut. i. 30; ii. 25; iii. 21, 22. Josh. x. 42.

entrance of Necho into Syria. A decisive battle in the valley of Megiddo proved the foolhardiness of his undertaking. The Judean army was completely defeated, and Josiah himself was slain.

This was a great shock to the religious convictions of the people. Here was the most pious of kings with his devoted people overwhelmed in battle by the heathen. Confidence in Jahveh to win a victory against overpowering numbers had proved, to the universal astonishment of Judah, a broken reed. Evidently there had been something wrong in their calculations. So the mind of the nation was again mightily stirred. A new thought was developed namely, that misfortune does not always shun the servants of the true God. Here it is believed the suggestion was taken for the book of *Job*. Many of the *Proverbs* also date from about this time. A spirit of worldly wisdom awoke and took form in many shrewd sayings, the gist of which is that it behooves a man to look out for himself. What may be called the philosophy of the nation grew out of its being thrown back upon its own strength, and so in some measure deprived of the expectation of divine interference in its behalf. A very considerable party, known as "the wise," figures henceforth in the making of books, bringing quite a distinct element into the Scriptures. The influence of these writers was very important, an occasional draught from their cups being of refreshing coolness after taking in the fiery potations of the prophets, and well calculated to keep the mind of Israel from perilous intoxication. But, a consequence

better than this, there came the noble voice of Jeremiah, developing and enforcing the idea that the people had not found the true service of Jahveh in their scrupulous observances and multiplied sacrifices. To merit the divine approval they must keep the moral law. Jerusalem was foul with licentiousness, robbery, murder and all villainy; what could be expected under such circumstances but destruction? “If,” says he, “if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, and walk not after other gods to your hurt; then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.” Again he breaks out: “Will ye steal, murder and commit adultery and swear falsely and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name and say, ‘We are free to do all these abominations’? Is this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers in your eyes?”*

The prophet Jeremiah is gloomy to that degree that every sorrowful picture of the future to this day is called a “jeremiade.” Such writing is not attractive to us in most of our moods. We are drawn rather to high and hopeful spirits who, when misfortune stares them in the face, will not see it. But this exuberance of hope is commonly born of youth and inexperience; and it is certainly too much to demand of a wise old man, confronted by such a

* Jer. vii. 5-7; 9-11.

national outlook as Judah had on the eve of the captivity, that he should be jubilant. His temper suits the actual prospect and so has about it the quality of *truth*, though it may not always be the most agreeable to the reader. And in fact occasions have never been wanting from that day to this when his picture of the desolations which await wickedness have not had their application; there has never been a period when reformers have not pointed their argument with his blistering reproaches.

Here we reach the full development of prophecy: true service of God is righteousness itself. Through centuries of struggle, through broken illusions, bitter disappointments and fearless endeavor, the great revelation is at last achieved. It came not in the days of Israel's political glory, but in the days of her misfortune, was wrung out of her exceeding great tribulations.

THIRD LECTURE.

THE EARLIER BOOKS.

THE objects of these lectures, let me say again, is to present a rational view of the origin and date of the various books of the Bible. For this purpose it has been necessary to take an historical survey of the people of Israel, it being assumed that their writings, like the writings of every other people, bear some relation to the state of the nation at the time when those writings were produced. On this basis the date of the principal books down to the reformation under Josiah at the close of the seventh century B.C. has been indicated. A brief resumé of this work, with a passing notice of a few books not yet mentioned, will here be in order. We have seen that enough is known of the condition of Israel at the time of the migration to Canaan and for five hundred years thereafter to preclude the possibility that any of the existing books of the Old Testament could have been produced in that period. In addition to this we have found abundant internal evidence that points unmistakably to a later date. The books placed first in the Bible, we have seen, are by no means the oldest. The circumstance that they treat of

the earliest time has given them a title to antiquity which is without foundation in fact. The book of *Judges** and the Pentateuch, as the first five books are called, and to which class the book of *Joshua* also belongs, contain traditions and legends which no doubt are the oldest things we have in the Bible, but these appear not to have taken a written form until the reigns of David and Solomon, and were then produced in books that are now lost.

The actual books of the Bible, as we have it, did not begin to appear until nearly a century after the disruption of the kingdom at the death of Solomon, and began then with the writings of the prophets. The misfortunes of the nation led to reflection and developed in a few leading minds lofty religious sensibilities which found expression in vehement and eloquent warnings, threats, promises, exhortations, first spoken to the people and then committed to writing to reach a larger audience. In this way the great age of Hebrew literature set in. These early prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, indicate not the slightest acquaintance with the books of the Law, and doubtless for the very good reason that none of those books were then in existence. Under the stimulus of these great minds, however, other literary efforts of a high order were soon put forth. Most of the writings which attained to permanence in this first period were of the

* Not put in its present shape until after the Assyrian captivity at any rate. The writer refers to the worship of Jahveh under the form of a bull in the temple of Dan, and gives the ancestry of those who were priests there, as he says, "*until the day of the captivity of the land.*"—*Judges* xviii. 30.

prophetic order, filled with a pathetic longing for the glories of a former age. But not all the splendor of Solomon could altogether bury the recollection of his shameless prodigality, and some poet made him figure characteristically in what is called *The Song of Songs*, trying to win the love of an honest Shulamite maiden away from her betrothed. It is a noble bit of romance, unique in the Scriptures, having a strong moral quality, and a gratifying termination, the Shulamite being proof against the seductions of the king and remaining true to her peasant lover.*

About the same time probably, *i. e.*, early in the eighth century B. C., the first of the *Psalms* appeared, the 45th, though Prof. Robertson Smith, in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," seems to think that the 7th and 18th are older, and date from David himself. And these two are all that he feels sure are David's. Two Psalms to David would be a very moderate concession, since it has been long supposed that he was the principal writer of the whole book. But it is getting more and more doubtful that any of the

* It would seem that this Song could only have been credited to Solomon in derision. For the king thus to record his own discomfiture in a most dishonorable undertaking would have been to "give himself away" decidedly.

Let me say here that in reading the Bible in order not to be misled it is often necessary to discard entirely the chapter headings and the running titles at the top of the pages. They do not belong there, are not in the original, and serve in very many instances only to hoodwink the reader in the interest of an old and exploded theory. Often they are grotesquely absurd, even ridiculously so, as when they make Christ play a part in the Song of Solomon. It would be a blessing to the ordinary reader if these obtrusive, left-handed helps to the sense were left out of future editions.

Psalms date back so far. Many of the *Proverbs* were composed in the latter half of the eighth century; and something was done toward writing out the current stories of the earlier ages, making a kind of first, but very incomplete, edition of the Pentateuch and forming the basis of the history-books, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel* and *Kings*. In the latter part of the next century Nahum wrote his little book of three chapters, possibly in Nineveh, for he was a descendant of one of the ten revolted tribes which were then under Assyrian dominion, and he may have been among the captives taken into Assyria. His vigorous maledictions upon the conquerors belongs to that class of foretelling which never has had any definite fulfilment. *Zephaniah*, another equally brief book, dates from about the same time and was called out from an apprehension that the Scythians, then moving down from the north, might take Jerusalem in their destroying course. The prophet believes that they will do so, and utters his oracle accordingly, foretelling the complete overthrow of the nation. However, a handful should be saved to restore the kingdom which the prophets all held must, in spite of everything, somehow prove abiding. But Zephaniah miscalculated, and the Scythians did not come.

A generation later wrote Habakkuk, contemporaneous with Jeremiah, having the same moral purposes but of inferior foresight, and much more hopeful than the situation would warrant, as affairs soon turned out.

Next in order of time was Obadiah with his one chapter, belaboring the Edomites for rejoicing over the fall

of Jerusalem. They are a kindred race and ought to have shown sympathy with Israel. He also closes with a glowing prophecy of Israel's future which has entirely failed of fulfilment. It remains to mention *Zechariah*, which is a book made up of three fragments belonging to widely separated periods of time. The first eight chapters were written after the return from captivity. The next three chapters are more than two hundred years older, and belong to the time of Amos; the last three chapters are by a contemporary of Jeremiah. The parts, of course, have no sort of connection, and, considered as the work of one man, are utterly unintelligible. If some of the ingenuity which has been wasted in trying to make the prophets point to Christ had been devoted to the rectification of such a miserable jumble as this of the book of *Zechariah*, the right understanding of the Scriptures would have been decidedly much more furthered.

Let us now return upon our steps a little, and consider the development of another class of writings. The prophets, whose works are left to us, we know wrote for a purpose. They are themselves the first to proclaim that. They were advocates of the exclusive worship of Jahveh. They sought to make Israel a "holy," that is, a distinct, separate people, whose God is Jahveh. Their struggle was with idolatry, with the influx of pagan elements which threatened to overwhelm all that was distinctive in their race. What was more natural than that other writings should be made to look in the same direction? Even history, we should expect, would be so told as to

help the cause. So, indeed, we find it. The narratives formulated in this time are strongly set against the worship of false gods and depict the terrible fate of idolaters. The book of Deuteronomy, the origin of which* so strongly recalls the recent origin of the "Book of Mormon," it having been hid away on purpose to be found and hailed as a miraculous revelation,—the book of Deuteronomy, dating from the reign of Josiah, 700 years after the exodus, simply puts into the mouth of Moses, or rather of Jahveh speaking through Moses, the very same exhortations, promises and threats which we read in Jeremiah and the other prophets of Josiah's time. History, biography, almost everything that was written took on the same tone and tendency. The past was made to speak, but not with any view to reveal itself. It was made to speak so as to influence the present.

We are never to lose sight of the fact that it was the favorite custom of Hebrew writers to credit their productions to distinguished national heroes. Down almost to the Christian era, books were written in the name of Solomon. Every producer of wise sayings found it advantageous to give them out as from the king who had somehow acquired a fabulous reputation for wisdom. So the Proverbs were called Solomon's, although written by various persons, one, two, and three hundred years after his time. As all wise sayings had a tendency to put themselves in the mouth of this typical father of wisdom, so all legal writing tended to take the name of Moses, the

* See pp. 51, 52.

typical law-giver. Now the ascription of writings to a hero to whom they did not really belong, so far from being reckoned reprehensible, was evidently regarded as praiseworthy. For a man of talent to do this was to pay a tribute to a name that the people delighted to honor, and to pay it in the most unselfish manner, involving the renunciation of his own title to fame. Thus we are left in ignorance of even the name of very many of the Bible writers,—they having yielded up the credit of their own productions, partly no doubt for the sake of giving their words more force, but also to contribute to the glory of their national heroes.

Your attention has been called to the revolution instituted by Josiah on the appearance of the book of Deuteronomy—a revolution as complete as force could make it—in favor of the exclusive worship of Jahveh. All the formal requirements of the newly discovered law were strictly carried out, and, according to the multiplied promises of the book, the prosperity of Israel was insured. The overwhelming defeat delivered by the Egyptian army in the plain of Megiddo awoke the nation from its dream of security only to find itself in a state of humiliation which grew more and more precarious. Literature answered to this condition in the book of *Job* which develops a new doctrine—the suffering of the righteous. The long and active life of Jeremiah stretches through this gloomy period, which reflects itself vividly from his prophecies and lamentations.

The misfortunes that had fallen on Judah through the ill-advised effort to thwart the king of Egypt, and the yet greater misfortunes, which were impending from the rising power of Babylon, led to sharp divisions among the leaders of the people, both as to the true explanation of these disasters and the proper attitude to take toward the great empire of the east. In fact there never had been entire accord among the prophets of Israel. The common run of them were always time-servers. Amos, Isaiah and Micah had been careful to distinguish themselves from the prophets in general, whose ways they had no sympathy with. But Jeremiah takes ground yet more decidedly against them.* He holds that Judah is punished because of her immoralities, and that there is no help but in repentance. He will not offer one word of encouragement for any military undertaking, looking to the deliverance of the nation from its vassalage, so long as the people, prophets, priests and all, are unready to put away their evil doings. On the other hand there were plenty of prophets to prophesy smooth things and stir up the fanaticism of the people to resist the encroachments of Babylon. Thus the worse party appeared to be the more patriotic, and the one great man who saw the fatuity of resistance, and reckoned the desolation of Judah and Jerusalem as but the just recompense of their sins, who held it the highest wisdom to make terms with the conqueror—this man was under the painful necessity of seeming to sympathize with the enemies of his country. The

* Jer. vi. 13 ; viii. 10 ; xxiii. 11 ; xxviii. 13 ; xxix. 32.

forces of Nebuchadnezzar had already once entered the city, and reduced the kingdom to a tributary province. The Assyrians, a century before, had overrun the Northern kingdom, and, to put an end to uprisings, had deported whole caravans of people and settled them in Assyria. It was very evident that rebellion in Judah would lead to a similar mode of treatment from the Babylonians. So when Jeremiah saw his countrymen, against his advice, persistent in throwing off the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, he uttered his prophecy that Jerusalem would be razed to the ground, and the inhabitants carried captive into Babylon. But still the old patriot hoped for a chastened and redeemed Israel, and said, further, unless this precise statement be, as some say, an interpolation, that the exiles would return again after seventy years and rebuild Jerusalem. In another place he says they will return after three generations, evidently not intending to fix the exact time. But during the exile Jeremiah's words came to be thoroughly appreciated, and it is worthy of notice as showing the tendency of a prophet's utterance to work out its own fulfilment, that within a period of less than seventy years the first band of exiles returned from Babylon. Still though there was here a rather remarkable fulfilment in point of time, in point of fact the prophecy, as we shall see, was not fulfilled in any such glorious fashion as was promised, so that, some centuries after, the writer of the book of *Daniel* concluded that there had been no fulfilment at all in seventy years, and

that Jeremiah must have meant seven times seventy years !*

But let us not anticipate. In 597 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar appeared again before Jerusalem and this time ravaged the city, carried off the costly vessels of the temple and compelled ten thousand of the citizens to remove to the banks of the Euphrates. Among those exiles was the prophet Ezekiel, who was soon to play a leading part in a new order of literature. Even this punishment did not serve to keep Judah in subjection. Another rebellion broke out, and, in 588 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem with the determination this time to wipe out that hot-bed of sedition. After a year and a half, during which time Jeremiah did his utmost to induce a surrender, the city fell. The victor went through it, levelling walls and temple with the ground, and burning up everything combustible. The best part of the people were taken off with the conquering army and settled somewhere in the neighborhood of Babylon, nobody now knows exactly where, along with the ten thousand that went before. Jeremiah was given his choice to go or stay, and chose to stay with the miserable remnant, from whom he suffered many indignities, but kept up his noble though heart-broken utterances. Most likely at this time lived Joel, who wrote in a like elevated moral tone, and whose earnestness and poetic charm did not escape the notice of the New Testament writers. A few other prophets labored to make something of the people remaining in

* See Fifth Lecture.

Judea, but to small purpose. The soul of the nation had gone to Babylon, and there for the next century the most interesting movements of religious thought go on.

It does not appear that the captives were misused in Babylonia. They were probably assigned a region of country and left largely to themselves. Delivered from any political aims or duties, the thought of the colony naturally took on a new order of development, or rather, the sacerdotal tone already taken became accentuated. Prophecy was restricted to the one hope of return to the holy city, which became transfigured in the imagination of the exiles to a heavenly abode. The civil power, with which prophecy heretofore had had its contention, was no longer a matter for consideration, being absolutely in the hands of the conquerors. Thought therefore centred upon things purely ecclesiastical. The priesthood, its authority, its duties, became the most absorbing subject. Some attention was given to historical writing, and the books of *Judges*, *Samuel*, and *Kings* appeared for the first in their present form. A few Psalms were written. But the peculiar development of the time was a definite religious ceremonial. Let us see that we have a clear idea how things stood in regard to orders of service down to this time.

We have seen that there had been, since the days of the Judges, a grand development of religious ideas. There had grown up the beginnings, at least, of a very noble literature, excessively grave no doubt, often rhapsodical, but still earnest, brave and elevated. A pronounced

moral and devout spirit had already placed this little people in respect of their religion first among the nations of the world. They had written out copiously the moral law and the obligations to the service of their God. There had been gradually formed an order of priests, and custom had established certain rights and ceremonies. But for these as yet custom was the only authority. Certain feasts and offerings are specified in Deuteronomy, but the whole book is a set of directions for king and people, not for the priests. And we shall search in vain in any of the books that existed at the commencement of the captivity for the priestly, ceremonial law. *Leviticus*, remember, had not yet been written. There was beginning to be felt a pressing need of such a law, there can be no doubt, for the priesthood had become a very important element in the commonwealth, and evidently developed to greater proportions in Babylonia. Their duties had naturally become complex and needed to be fixed by law, as also their claims upon the people for maintenance. How was this law to be produced and promulgated? Evidently by the highest authority then known, the voice of a prophet, who, the better to fit him for this office, should also be a priest. Such a man was Ezekiel, and he is the man who formulated the first code in Israel, concerning the priesthood. The conclusive proof of this lies in the fact that in many important particulars Ezekiel's regulations differ absolutely from the law of *Leviticus*, as they certainly would not have done if Ezekiel had known that law. If rules, supposed to have come down from

Moses, had been in force, the prophet would not have ventured to modify them. Moreover Ezekiel's scheme of public worship was laid aside in the next century for that of Leviticus, showing again that the Mosaic book must have appeared subsequently to that of the prophet. How it appeared we shall shortly see.

We know of the condition of the exiles in Babylonia only by inference from the books written there, none of which treats directly of that time; and from changes we are able to trace in the ideas of the people as compared with pre-exilic times. The three conspicuous writers in the captivity were, an unknown historian, author of what is called the *Book of Origins*, Ezekiel, and another prophet whose name we do not know, a man more after the spirit of Jeremiah, though not of the same sombre cast, who, because his writings are mixed with those of Isaiah,* is called the second-Isaiah, sometimes the "Great Unnamed." The real Isaiah lived two hundred years before this time; and it used to be thought quite miraculous that he should be so absorbed in the prospect of return from the captivity, and even mention by name the Persian king through whom return was made possible, when the Persian kingdom had not yet come into existence for one hundred and fifty years after Isaiah was dead. But this is explained now by the discovery that all that part of the book relating to Cyrus and the return of the Israelites, was written by one who shared in the captivity, and who lived to go back with his people to Jerusalem. So in one

* Isa. xxiv.-xxvii; xxxiv.-xxxv.; xl.-lxvi.

way and another the whole pretence that the prophets were gifted with superhuman foresight has been overthrown. Very many of their real predictions failed entirely; many more which are supposed to have been fulfilled were written after the events to which they relate; and the few instances where the future was indubitably foretold are sufficiently explained, when we come to get at the facts, on the ground of manifest probability; especially when we remember that, out of a hundred guesses at what was going to happen, that only would be likely to be preserved which chanced to state the case somewhat as it turned out.

The other great writing of the captivity was the so-called "Book of Origins," which has since been incorporated in the books of *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Numbers*, *Leviticus* and *Joshua*. This was a compilation of the existing narratives, traditions and legends, greatly enlarged to give a continuous sketch from the very dawn of creation. It contained the stories of Eden and of the flood, which were probably picked up in Babylon. It also contained a much extended amplification of Ezekiel's scheme of priestly laws, developed in the retirement of the captivity for application in the temple of Jerusalem whenever the hour of release should come. Like the author of Deuteronomy he writes in the name of Moses, and assumes to speak from the age of the exodus, taking advantage of his position to speak prophetically of the centuries already elapsed. This kind of writing is of course impossible in our time, but we can easily see it must have had amazing force in

a less discriminating age, affording the writer an opportunity to deal the heaviest blows at present evil behind the shelter of an ancient name, and even to conjure from the lips of fabulous heroes precepts to govern church and state.

But to return to our history. Babylon, too, had its day, as Assyria before it. Cyrus liberated Persia from the Medes, brought Media and Lydia under subjection, and soon threatened Babylon itself. The Israelites watched his rise and progress with intense interest. There were reasons for thinking that, should he conquer Babylonia, there would be for them something more than a change of masters. The Persian religion had strong points of resemblance to their own, and it is certain that during the captivity Persian influences told upon the religion of Israel. It is especially marked in the doctrines of angels and demons which begin now to play a part in the prophetic and other writings. Regarded at a distance the likeness of Zarathustranism to Mosaism was exaggerated, and in Isaiah Cyrus figures as a veritable hero of Jahveh.* The monarch no doubt learned how he was esteemed by the Israelites, and was far too wise to miss the chance of turning their good-will to his own advantage. As soon as he had made the conquest of Babylon, which he did, after a memorable siege, by drawing off the waters of the Euphrates and marching in through the bed of the river, the Jews having solicited the privilege of returning to their native city, he freely granted it. They could return or stay, as they pleased.

* Isa. xlv. 1; "Thus saith Jahveh to his anointed, to Cyrus," &c.

Not all were disposed at once to go back. Many had become comfortably situated where they were. Still enough were ready to make quite a caravan. The record of the number is incomplete except as regards the priests, who alone amounted to several thousands. Under Zerubbabel, a descendant of the royal family, and Joshua, the high-priest, they made their way to Jerusalem, which they found in extremely forlorn condition. The Persian king had been generous enough to make some appropriation for the rebuilding of the temple. But they were embarrassed in one way and another, and for fifteen years very little was accomplished. Two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, made their appearance at this time and by their earnest words pushed on the work. Still the reality of the return from captivity was only the tamest fulfilment of the national drama. Instead of the glory that had been promised, the returned exiles were in a miserable condition of penury, and actually in danger of starvation. No wonder that there is such a contrast between Isaiah and Haggai. The age of great expectations is vanishing, and with it the prophetic spirit. It is said the people wept when they saw the insignificant temple going up which was to take the place of the old splendor. This prosaic outcome of all the glowing descriptions of Israel's redemption which had stimulated the imaginations of the people for a thousand years, made the old enthusiasm henceforth impossible. There is decay and shortly cessation of prophecy ; but already the people have been prepared for the next stage of their experience, namely, the

rise and dominion of the hierarchy. Henceforth priests and scribes have the posts of influence.

In 516 B. C. the temple, such as it was, very inferior of course to Solomon's, was built. Of Jerusalem in the next sixty years we know very little. The attention of the world is in another quarter. Xerxes had attempted the conquest of Greece, and while the Jews were struggling with the task of restoring their little city, immortal renown was gathering about the names of Marathon, Thermopylæ and Salamis. The myriad hosts of Asia were overmatched by the incomparable Greeks, few in numbers but fired with the passion for freedom and for fame. We do not wonder that after these events the Persian government has little disposition to meddle with the affairs of Judea, and we are prepared to see the Jews left pretty much to themselves. Their situation was none the less full of difficulties and dangers. The old feud had been revived with the Samaritans—relies of the "ten tribes"—by refusing to accept their proffered assistance in building the temple. Jahvism from first to last—even in the form of modern Judaism—depends for its existence upon exclusiveness. Its leaders have always insisted upon a separate people, and to this day intermarriage with Gentiles is stoutly opposed. But this exclusiveness is hard to justify, and there have been periods in Israel's history when this rigor has been relaxed. The prophets of the captivity recognise the whole twelve tribes in the restoration, and such descendants of the revolted ten tribes as desired were permitted to join the community in Judea.

To some it seemed that a wider welcome should be given. There was even reason to apprehend that the lines of distinction would be entirely eradicated, that the Jews would be absorbed by their neighbors, and their nationality lost.

So it might have been but that deliverance from this danger soon came in the shape of a fresh band from Babylonia. It was in the year 458 B. C. that Ezra, the priest and scribe, got permission of the king Artaxerxes to remove with a considerable company of exiles to Jerusalem. He went, it seems, bearing many gracious favors from the king, and commissioned to put things in order according to "The law of his God which he had in his hand." Here was a man destined to work another revolution in Israel. We have his account of his journey to Jerusalem which is that of a man much given to the forms of piety, and a full report of the temple service held on his arrival there; but I pass by this to the more extraordinary events that followed. Ezra no doubt immediately cast about to observe the condition, and soon discovered, to use his own language, that "the people, the priests, and the Levites, had taken wives for themselves and their sons out of the tribes which they found in Judea and in the adjacent regions; so the holy nation had mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands; the princes and rulers, far from preventing this evil, had set the example of committing it."* Ezra is greatly astonished at this state of things, and makes strong demonstrations of his

* Ez. ix. 1, 2.

grief in the Jewish style, rending his garments and prostrating himself in the dust. He turns to Jahveh and makes public confession of the sin of his people. The city, full of reverence for Ezra, who has come to them clothed with high authority, is greatly moved by his words. One of the leading men says: "Let us all make a covenant with our God to put away these wives and their children." With this proposition Ezra at once closes, and the priests and other chief citizens make oath that it shall be carried out. So much are they in earnest that though it was the height of the rainy season, when it is all one's life is worth to be out of doors, they convened a great national assembly at Jerusalem. Every man had to be there within three days. No building would hold the assembled multitude, and they were obliged to stand in the open space in front of the temple. Meantime, the rain poured down in torrents. Under these dissolving conditions they are addressed by Ezra, who demands that all who have taken foreign wives at once set them adrift, and so avoid the displeasure of Jahveh. Four men only in all the crowd stand out against this hard requirement, and Ezra is thoughtful enough to give us their names, supposing that he would thus set them in perpetual ignominy. The rest all acquiesced, and only asked for a little time to adjust the matter under their rulers and elders. In three months the whole business was done, and the foreign wives and their children disposed of. How it fared with them we do not know. Ezra gives a list of the guilty, and ends his book with this cold-blooded

statement, "All these had taken strange wives ; and some of them had wives by whom they had children." The sorrows resulting we are left to imagine. There is no pretence that these wives were unfaithful, or any charge of polygamy. The proposed legal dissolution of polygamous marriages in Utah by Act of Congress, which has raised such a vehement protest in behalf of the threatened wives and children, affords but a feeble suggestion of the woes involved in this pruning of the Jewish state by the strong hand of priestly power.

Ezra's work was now well under way, and we expect to see him go on, but for some reason he appears to have been interrupted. Perhaps the king may have revoked his commission. Or perhaps the people may have withstood his authority. At any rate we know nothing more of affairs at Jerusalem for thirteen years. Then Nehemiah, who had won his way to the royal favor, and held the post of cupbearer to Artaxerxes, obtained permission to go to Jerusalem and build up its walls and gates. He was vested with the commission of governor, and furnished with some means to carry out this project. Nehemiah, though not a priest, is a man full of the priestly piety. He reminds us of more than one of the English Puritans. His darling object in building the walls is that he may close the gates before dark Friday evening, and keep them closed over Sabbath to prevent the people from the neighboring towns coming in with their wares to sell on that holy day.* Everything that happens to

*Neh. xiii. 15-22.

him is of God. He is anxious at every turn to do something for God. He is a prolix and bungling narrator, descending to wearisome minutiae, and is never eloquent except where he has the privilege—as a good deacon once expressed it in “conference meeting”—the privilege of “throwing his remarks in the form of prayer.”

But what especially interests us now in Nehemiah is the fact that with him Ezra re-appears upon the stage of Israel's affairs. Ezra the scribe, the ready writer, the man versed in the law, has not been idle these thirteen years. He came to Jerusalem at first “with the law of his God in his hand.” He has had time now to put the finishing touches to that law. A great assembly of the people is called, and with imposing ceremonies, Ezra, supported by thirteen priests, produces what is called the “Law of Moses,” and proceeds to read it to the people. Evidently it is something the people have not heard before, in this shape at least, for Levites are posted among them to explain as he reads. The whole proceeding recalls other meetings we have seen, where many talk at once and where the assembly is greatly moved. All around the people are in tears and making outcries of sorrow and penitence. The leaders are constrained to quiet them; the reading is suspended, until the next day, and the assembly bidden to go forth and enjoy themselves in festivities over this publication of the *Law*. Eight consecutive days the meetings are kept up, and every day the reading of the *Law* goes on. On the last day the whole matter is summed up, and, with confession and prayer, priests

and people make a solemn pledge to observe the *Law* which they have heard.*

* This most extraordinary event is related in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, where it should be carefully studied. If we have to thank the writer anywhere for his prolixity, it is here. The people standing in the street; Ezra's wooden pulpit, made expressly for the occasion; the names of the thirteen priests supporting him in the ceremony, so many on his right hand, so many on his left; the names of the priests who with the Levites went through the crowd and explained the Law as Ezra read,—though in themselves uninteresting facts, are not out of place here, and have indeed very important implications. It is a picture of *the reign of the priesthood*. Ezra is a pontiff whose authority is not to be gainsaid. What he delivers as the Law from Moses *must* be the genuine article. We are not surprised therefore that the people are thrown into such consternation as he goes on specifying requirements which they had never before heard as from such high authority—that they “all wept when they heard the words of the Law,” many provisions of which had not been observed at all. Mention is directly made of one of these, and Nehemiah naïvely says: “they found written in the Law which Jahveh had commanded by Moses that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month”; and he goes on to tell how this regulation was then carried out *for the first time*; “since the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day had not the children of Israel done so”! Can it be supposed for an instant that this law was known in the time of the first temple; known to David and Solomon and the great prophets, who never paid the slightest attention to it? Such an idea cannot for a moment be admitted. We are forced to the conclusion that Ezra did not revive an old code of laws which had been lost in the captivity, as some have thought, but that he introduced this code *de novo* to the people in Jerusalem. There is good evidence that what books the people had, far from being lost in Babylonia, were preserved there with extraordinary care, and that large additions were made. And among these additions we are to reckon a great part of this very Law which Ezra bore “in his hand” as he came from Babylon, held for thirteen years, and doubtless further elaborated, and finally published as above related.

Let it be observed that this conclusion, as well as that regarding Deuteronomy at the close of my second lecture, is established *on the testimony of unwilling witnesses*. In both cases the narrators from whose accounts I have drawn my conclusions, and the redactors through whose hands these accounts have passed, had an interest in *not* revealing the main facts. But, as we have seen, the circumstances which they do relate are intelligible only on the assumption of these facts, and so become the strongest kind of evidence.

Here we have the second great step taken toward the formation of a set of sacred books. Up to this time Israel had only one book which had really attained to this rank and become an acknowledged authority. That was Deuteronomy, which Hilkiyah had found in the temple one hundred and seventy-five years before. To be sure, the prophets were read and had a kind of authority, but only such as they could carry on the strength of their eloquence or reputation. Ezra brought out the whole *Pentateuch*, including *Joshua*, with impressive solemnities as the revelation of Jahveh to Israel. The substance of the last two books had been written in the time of Josiah; much that stands in *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus* and *Numbers* had been produced in Babylonia by the author of the "Book of Origins." Ezra made additions, and by a stroke of priestly art, for which the time was ripe, set the whole before his people as a divine revelation. This most important event in the history of Jewish literature occurred in the year 444 B. C. The story in one of the apocryphal books of *Ezra*, that Ezra dictated to his assistants the whole of the Old Testament—the books having been lost in the captivity—is worthy of notice only as indicating the strength of the tradition that Ezra did something remarkable in the book line. The first four books of the Bible were not reproduced; they were made, partly in Babylonia by an unknown hand who gathered up the legends of his people, adding such laws as the priesthood had come to require; partly by Ezra himself; and were unknown even to Jeremiah, who says explicitly, speaking in the name of Jahveh; "I did not treat with your

fathers when I led them out of the land of Egypt, nor give them commandments concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your god and ye shall be my people, and walk ye in all the ways that I shall command you that it may go well with you." We see from this that the prophet knew Deuteronomy but could not have known Leviticus. Nor do any of the prophets before Ezra know of Adam and his fall, or of Noah and his ark. In fact all these books, read in the light of the view here presented, become "confirmations strong" of its general correctness. The first prophet to mention the Mosaic law is Malachi, who lived in the very time of Ezra, and wrote in the interest of the exclusive regulations which Ezra introduced.

I have now, at the risk of being tedious, indicated the date and purpose of every book of the Bible which had appeared down to, and including the time of Ezra. We see that the books are not yet all written, and the canon has only just begun to be formed. The only writings thus far recognised as absolutely sacred are the Books of the Law, including Joshua. Some other books were written and would soon be candidates for admission to the sacred list. The song-book of the temple was growing, and already had the quasi-sanctity which hymns have with us. But the Law was the first part to be accredited as an authoritative revelation, and with the Jews it has ever held the first and unapproachable place. And yet by what crooked ways, by what misrepresentations and priestly chicane, did this first acknowledged revelation acquire its sanctity and its authority!

FOURTH LECTURE.

RULE OF THE HIERARCHY.

WE are now at a period in the history of Israel when the astonishing power of literary productiveness which marked the nation some time before, and even continued into, the captivity, is no more. Instead of this, as has been observed, came a disposition to gather up and perpetuate under high sanction what had already been produced. It remains now for us to trace the narrowed stream of Jewish literature a few centuries further on, observing as we pass the gradual growth of the Old Testament canon.

Ezra's triumph, as we have seen, was complete. A religious and tribal exclusiveness more intense than had ever been known before, established itself at Jerusalem. While the mighty empires of the East ignored the crushed and powerless province of Judea, too insignificant in its overthrow to attract further attention, the Jew himself, under the lead of the priesthood, seemed to retaliate, and assumed more than his ancient sense of superiority to other men. The notion of a chosen, a holy people was intensified, and a spirit of intolerance exhibited which contrasted strangely with the shattered and humiliated condition of the state. This was, however, but the natu-

ral outcome of the idea, now fully developed, that Jahveh, was the only God. In the early days of Israel when the existence of other gods for other nations was freely acknowledged, there was the admission also that those gods and their worshippers had certain rights,* and their altars were even erected side by side with those of Jahveh; showing something of the liberal catholicity which afterwards marked the religious life of Greece and Rome. But the instant the grand assertion began to be made that Jahveh was the *only* God, respect for other faiths was necessarily restricted. And as this assertion strengthened, and at last became the general belief, a corresponding contempt for the outside world of idolaters grew up. Only in Israel was Jahveh worshipped. All the rest of mankind, then, were living in neglect of the true God, who would assuredly bring them to nought. It was the part of his servant to separate himself entirely from these people on whom the divine vengeance must sooner or later fall. We have seen how Ezra put this doctrine in practice on his first arrival in Jerusalem by insisting, in the name of God, that every Jew who had taken a foreign wife should at once part company with her and her children. We may well believe that this high-handed proceeding did not go through without some protest. Four

* This has been already sufficiently shown in the previous lectures. An utterance of Micah, however, is so clearly to the point that it may be given here. The prophet is setting forth the glories of the coming time when people will cease from their contentions about religion and everything else, "beating their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks." Then, he says, "all people will walk, *every one in the name of his god*, and we will walk in the name of Jahveh, our god, forever and ever."

men are mentioned by name as having demurred at the edict of separation.* But it is of more interest that we are able to say with some confidence that the opposition took a literary form in two brief yet remarkable books that have come down to us. One of these, the book of *Ruth*, appears in your bibles next after Judges, and bears date in the margin as of the next century after the migration to Canaan. This however can only be taken as the time in which the story is laid, as it has long been evident to scholars, on philological grounds, that the writings must be assigned to a later period.† The argument of the book suits to the time immediately after Ezra's reformation, and indicates a reaction in some minds. You are familiar with the beautiful story, how Boaz, a man of high repute in Israel, took a Moabitish damsel to be his wife, and how Jahveh looked on this act with approval, and made the foreign wife to be in the fourth generation the mother of David. It is impossible to tell whether this story rests upon actual tradition concerning the ancestry of David,‡ or was invented by the writer to suit his purpose. However it may be, that purpose is unmistakable. He means to show that it is a perfectly creditable thing to take a wife from outside the nation of Israel if the chance offers of getting a good one. And his art lies

* "Only Jonathan, the son of Asahel, and Jehaziah, the son of Tikvah, opposed this matter, and Mesullam and Shabbathia the Levite supported them.—Ezra x. 15. *Kuenen's version.*

† † De Wett remarks on the Chaldaisms scattered through it.

‡ Kuenen thinks it a veritable tradition and that it is supported by the statement that David, when pursued by Saul, took refuge in Moab, *i. e.*, among his kindred.

in embodying this idea in a story of early pastoral life, of remarkable sweetness, and linking his characters in the line of David, which was enough to endear them forever to the Jews.

The other book to which I have referred as having been called out in protest against Ezra's exclusiveness must have appeared about the same time. It is the book of *Jonah*. Unfortunately the name of Jonah always suggests a whale, and so this bit of writing is generally passed by with a smile, being belittled by the grotesqueness of the main incident. The custom is to read it as a matter of fact, and in that view it is of course too much for gravity. But it is really a fine chapter of fiction written, like Ruth, for a purpose. The little book is formed on a broad conception that God cares for others as well as for Jews, and a Jewish prophet is taken through a series of mishaps for failing to recognise this obvious truth. The art of the writer, considering the habits and customs of the people for whom he wrote, is consummate. The plot of the story is laid four hundred and fifty years back, so as to give to it the authority of antiquity. A prophet of Israel is directed by Jahveh to go away to Nineveh and preach the destruction of that wicked city. The prophet exhibits the Jewish reluctance to have anything to do with the heathen, and seeks by flight to evade the performance of his duty. But Jahveh follows him up, and leads him through such strange ways that he finally considers it best to pocket his exclusive holiness, go to Nineveh and preach to the polluted idolaters. This he does, and with an effect

quite contrary to his expectations, for the people are smitten with penitence, and are ready to do anything the prophet may require. But the prophet, true to his natural hate of foreigners, persists that they shall be destroyed. Here Jahveh comes in again and over-rules this spirit, showing himself as ready to pardon repentant Nineveh as repentant Jerusalem, and, to the infinite disgust of Jonah, refuses to fulfil the prophecy of destruction. Could any rebuke of Jewish narrowness, as it was revived and intensified after the captivity, be more withering ?

It should be observed also that this book of Jonah was designed to meet one other question. By this time it had come to be very plain that the forecasting of the prophets was not always verified by results. Even the greatest of them had made threats and promises that had failed of being carried out, which was very embarrassing, as under the Deuteronomic law this failure involved the condemnation of the prophet.* But under such a rule every prophet must sometime be found wanting. The writer of this little book endeavors to get over this difficulty by supposing that new conditions necessitate the modification of rewards and punishments. Nineveh's confessing and forsaking its sins, puts a new phase on the matter. "Thou, O Jahveh, art a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and of great kindness, and *repentest*

* This was brought out in answer to the question, "How shall we know the word which Jahveh hath not spoken?" The answer given is: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jahveh, *if the thing follow not nor come to pass*, that is the thing that Jahveh hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously."—Deut. xviii. 21, 22,

thee of the evil " (which thou hast threatened to inflict.)* Thus the prophetic reputation and the Divine reputation are in a manner, both saved at once.

While at this distance we can warmly appreciate the sentiment of these two books, let us not fall into the error of siding against Ezra and Nehemiah in their movement. That there was something to be urged against it the writers of Ruth and Jonah show; and yet, without doubt, it was the only course to save the Jewish state from total disintegration. In ecclesiastical and political matters it is not the good of the whole world that is uppermost but the good of a nation or a sect; and in this narrower view Ezra's work needed to be done. It was but a step in a necessary course of development, a practical application of ideas which the whole period of the captivity had conspired to bring to the front. It was a *reformation* in that it did produce an essential change in the religious condition of the Jews. So we call the work of Hezekiah and more especially that of Josiah, a reformation. But we must have a care not to understand too much by this word in these connections. The changes brought about through Ezra and Nehemiah were in some respects a gain, in others they were a loss. Kuenen, comparing the epoch which now closes with that which opens, says: " There *the spirit* prevails, here *the letter*; there *the free word*, here *the written word*. *The prophet* represents the time before the reformation; after Ezra his place is taken by

* Jon. iv. 2.

the scribe."* This change, however, he cautions us against supposing to have been at all sudden. It was a gradual process, having its antecedent period of preparation, developing at last into full-fledged Judaism.

While this process went on in Judea, the world was again changing hands. Alexander the Great, having the mastery of Greece, found himself able to march victoriously to the end of the earth.† The Persian empire went down before him and Asia for the first time fell under European dominion. It is on record that when Alexander was besieging Tyre he demanded the submission of the Jews, which they refused, alleging that their duty was to Persia by the oath of the people sworn to Darius. As this was probably the only instance that Alexander met with in Asia of a tributary people recognising the binding obligation of an oath of fealty to a ruling power, and as the Jews, seeing how things were going, soon after sent him their submission, he forgave their first refusal, and ever after treated them with consideration, welcoming many of them to his city of Alexandria, where in time they came to have a great influence. In 323 B. C. Alexander died and "his kingdom," as the book of Daniel, written one hundred and fifty-eight years after, describes it, "his kingdom was broken and divided

* Religion of Israel, vol. II. p. 245.

† 1 Macc. i. It is with a peculiar sense of satisfaction, after reading so much that is half legendary in connection with Israel, that we come upon the *First book of Maccibees* and find solid historical ground. The statement in regard to Alexander, for instance, are as strictly true as any recorded in *profane* history. Can this be a reason why Protestants have left the book out of their canon?

toward the four winds of heaven.”* One of his generals, Ptolemæus, the son of Lagus, acquired control of Palestine, and for a hundred years it formed part of the Egyptian kingdom.

Some time in this period it seems likely was written the book of *Baruch*—an attempt to resume the prophetic style. The writer could not prophecy in his own name, or in his own age, and so assumes to write in the name of Jeremiah’s assistant,† and from the days of the captivity. Aside from this pretence of being somebody he was not, he does credit to the name he has taken, and considering that the work is considerably older than several books which have been admitted into the canon, we are surprised that Baruch has a place only in the Apocrypha. At the end of this book is attached a so-called *Epistle of Jeremiah*, which is perhaps two hundred years younger.

About the beginning of the third century B. C. we must place the books of *Chronicles*. The writer undertakes a new version of Israel’s career from the days of Saul down to the captivity, going over nearly the same ground as the older books of Samuel and Kings, prefacing the whole with nine wearisome chapters of genealogies of priests and kings, carried back to Adam. This work reflects with unintentional fidelity the spirit of the time in which it was written, and as an indirect record of the customs and opinions then current (300 B. C.) it has a certain value,

* Dan. xi. 4. This and much more in regard to Alexander and the subsequent kings was written in the form of prophecy, but *post eventum*, as we shall see.

† Jer. xxxvi. 4.

while adding nothing to our knowledge of the earlier time. At the date of this writing Jewish ideas had undergone such a change under the priestly influence that it became desirable to have the history of the early kings cast in a new light so as to throw the priesthood and the temple into more prominence. This recasting involved many contradictions of the older books, which have given the commentators no end of trouble. Fixing the date of Chronicles as late as the third century, and taking into account the evident purpose of the writer in diverging from his authorities, and these contradictions are at once explained. The Chronicler is thoroughly imbued with the priestly spirit, and his ruling ambition in writing history is to magnify the priestly office. So he represents the priesthood in the time of Solomon with the same functions as it had after Ezra. The temple and the temple-service are the things that most nearly concern him. Himself a Levite, he dwells with fondness on whatever will glorify his own order. Because the ten tribes forsook the temple and appointed priests who were not Levites, he drops them out of his account altogether. He represents, contrary to the older record, that it was regarded in the days of the kings absolutely unlawful for any but the priests to offer sacrifices, and states that Uzziah, venturing to do this thing himself, in opposition to the will of the priests, Jahveh interfered and smote the king with leprosy.* The main difference between the Chronicler and the historians whose work he would re-

* 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-20.

place is, that, writing at a time when the new Levitical law has been introduced, he wishes to make it appear that that law is of high antiquity, and represents Solomon and David as perfectly familiar with its requirements.* David, according to this writer, received from Jahveh the plan for the construction of the temple, with full details of the order of service to be established; whereas, in the previous account the temple is altogether Solomon's idea. David had become completely idealized in the thought of the people as the hero-saint and singer of Israel. The Chronicler goes to all lengths of absurdity in making him out a sacred poet, until the picture he draws is as unlike the David of the other historians as can well be imagined. In short, these books are the most egregious examples the Bible affords of making history in the furtherance of an idea. And yet, probably we ought not to impeach the honesty of the writer. He appears to be honest, and yet he is not trustworthy. That is to say, he is so thoroughly imbued with the Law introduced by Ezra, so assured of its being the old Law, handed down from Moses, that he feels authorized to assume its observance in the glorious days of the monarchy. This writer was a very busy man with the older literature, for, beside producing his substitute for the books of Samuel and Kings, he re-wrote the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, apparently with considerable omissions, and leaving upon them traces of the time in which he wrote,—not earlier than 300 B. C.

Any adequate account of this epoch, from 400 to 200

† Compare 1 Chron. xv. 2; xvi. 39, 40; xxi. 28, 32; 2 Chron. viii : 12, 13, with 1 Kings ix. 25.

B. C., would be filled to weariness with description of the elaborate arrangement of the temple-service. Scarce anywhere or ever has ritualism had such absolute sway. Foiled in every political undertaking, the glory of original prophecy departed, the Jew bent his energies to the development of a gorgeous and infinitely precise ceremonial. True to his old instinct of dating everything from the ancients he shut his eyes to the fact that this was a new growth, and still went on elaborating the ritual. Singing became a great feature, and the genius of the people turned itself to the production of songs. In the course of the first hundred years after Ezra, the larger part of the *Psalms* was written. It was the grand era of sacred poetry. Out of all that was produced the most excellent pieces were selected to be sung in the temple, and so were set on the way to canonicity. Just as the wisdom-books were ascribed to Solomon, and the legal books to Moses, these poetic effusions tended to take the name of David, who was by force of tradition the typical singer. But, as we now see, the occasion which called for this book of songs did not exist till after Ezra had instituted the fully developed temple-service. Moreover, their substance generally suits only to this later time.

All down through the preceding centuries we observe there was a conflict between the prophets and the people over the matter of worship. The people are ever falling into idolatry, for which the prophets never cease berating them. The prophetic indignation is especially strong

against religious observances of foreign extraction. Since Ezra, all is changed. We hear no more of the nation lapsing into the worship of false gods, no more vehement assaults upon idolatry as a Jewish sin. What is the meaning of this? Is the tendency of the people entirely changed? or have the leaders come to tolerate what was so hateful to the prophets?

Doubtless the solution of this problem lies in the fact, that, as a compromise, in the revised ritual some things were admitted of a foreign type for which the people had shown a strong predilection. Taken from other forms of worship, they were here embodied as a part of the service of Jahveh, and so Jahvism at once enriched its ceremonial and made sure of its adherents,—a process identical with that adopted in after times by the Roman Church in its connection with Paganism. It matters not—so thought the priests, more accommodating than the prophets—it matters not that the feast of the new-moon was originally a heathen celebration of the reappearance of the Moon-god; the people are attached to it; let it become a part of the Jewish law. The Sabbath-day—in the rituals of other peoples, Saturn's day (Saturday)—naturally connected the service of Saturn with that of Jahveh. In the original conception one of these gods is hardly more stern and inhuman than the other; and if Jahveh had been elevated and spiritualized in the course of the centuries, so, we must remember, to some extent had the pagan deity. Something therefore could be, and doubtless was, transfer-

red from one to the other in the order of Sabbath worship finally established for the temple. And so of other observances too numerous to mention, and which, beside, are too foreign to our thought to have any special interest. I must, however, refer to one other festival of heathen derivation, because it will enable me to explain the origin of another book of the Bible. This is the "Purim feast," so called from the Persian name of the month in which it occurs. This feast, as the name indicates, was adopted from the Persians, and on that account may not for a long time have been very generally observed. It needed some distinctively Jewish motive in its support. So some lover of this feast wrote the book of *Esther*, in which, by means of a wholly imaginative story, he undertakes to give a Jewish origin to Purim.* You know the story, how Haman, prime minister of Ahasuerus (Xerxes I.), out of hatred for the Jews contrived a plot for putting them all to death. One of them, Mordecai, gets his cousin Esther, who, as good luck would have it, is the Persian queen, wife of the great Xerxes, to intercede with the king in behalf of her people; and with such good results that Haman himself comes to grief, and the Jews obtain permission to kill their enemies to their heart's content; which they proceed to do on a grand scale, killing 75,000 the first day, and finishing up the business on the morrow, after which they have a great feast in celebration of their rescue, and in rejoicing over the downfall of their ene-

* Est. ix. 27, seq.

mies.* Thus the writer gives an origin to the Purim feast calculated to make it acceptable to the Jewish mind. The object of the book was fully accomplished, and Purim became among the most popular of feasts. For centuries afterward these proverbs were current among the Jews. "The Temple may fail, but Purim never." "The prophets may fail, but not the Megillah" (as they called the roll on which Esther was written). This success of the book was the more remarkable, as there is nothing in it of a strictly religious character, no mention of a supreme Being, and no reference to the Jews in Palestine. However, the author emphasizes the idea that Jews are better than other people, and this may have commended his work. The spirit of the book is decidedly antagonistic to Ruth and Jonah, and doubtless pleased a class who were not altogether pleased with those books.

We have now entered upon a period which to the general reader is less familiarly known. The reign of the priests and scribes has been fatal to original prophecy. Men who in other times would have been authors are now compilers. Attention is fixed upon what has been written, and the great works of the preceding centuries are lifted up into an air of sanctity. The Law, since the occasion when it was brought out in completed form by Ezra, had

* It is certainly astonishing that this story should pass anywhere as matter of fact. Every point in it is highly improbable,—Xerxes having a Jewish wife—his minister having a spite against the Jews—there being any considerable number of Jews in Susa—the king turning his palace into a slaughter-house to gratify them—all are points which together make a story incredible.

had the character of a sacred book.* To the other writings of which mention has been made, various less degrees of sanctity had come to be attached. Gradually, and through the operation of the Jewish mind under the conditions and circumstances I have described, these books took on the quality of a divine revelation. The Law had the first place, because the Law was so mysteriously produced† that its supernatural character appeared beyond question. It had come by ways past finding out. The rest of the books had been written and preserved by natural means and therefore took secondary rank; and their admission to the sacred list depended on the popular preference, guided by the priests and scribes. For, it is to be borne in mind, however the rise of the hierarchy quenched the prophetic spirit which could never have been the gift of more than a few, it served greatly in the general elevation of the people. To it belongs the establishment of the synagogue—on the pattern of which the Christian church has been formed. To take in the significance of this institution and the great change effected by introducing it, call to mind that the old custom had been to worship one god and another on various hill-tops all through the country with various and sometimes revolting rites; that even where there was celebrated only the worship of Jahveh, the service consisted wholly of sacrifices, oblations and other propitiatory observances. All this ritualistic business was transferred to Jerusalem,

* Deuteronomy had had this character from Josiah's time (620 B.C.).

† See pp. 51, 52, 84, 85.

and instead of altars of sacrifice scattered through the country, synagogues were built, and so a means of education was substituted for the "high places" which had been only the seats of a more or less superstitious worship. In the synagogues the national literature was read and expounded; whoever could instruct his neighbor spoke; and so the intelligence of the whole community was deepened and enriched. As a consequence, though this was the reign of the priesthood, orders of thought were still developed which did not run in the priestly line. The writers of wisdom of the days before the exile had their disciples yet, and two works, dating not far from the beginning of the second century B. C., remain to indicate the fact. The first of these in order of time is the book of *Ecclesiastes*. This book is the great stumbling-block of readers who expect to find the various parts of the Bible in accord on the main doctrines of Christianity. From the captivity the Jews had brought, along with belief in Satan, angels and demons, at least some acquaintance with a doctrine of immortality. Strange as it may seem to us who have been educated under the constant assurance of an endless life, and have come to associate that doctrine so inseparably with the very idea of religion, it is nevertheless true that religion as taught by the prophets of Israel involved no conception of a personal immortality. They appear not to have concerned themselves in the least on that subject. Only Job, writing as late as the sixth century, raises any question* concerning an-

* Job xiv. 14. "If a man die will he live again?"

other life, which by the strongest possible expressions, he decides in the negative.* But in the third century, from one source and another, a belief in a future life had got some foothold among the Jews. One of the purposes of the writer of Ecclesiastes is to show the folly of any such idea. 'Tis preposterous, he thinks, for man, who is only a bubble blown up with vanity, to take on the airs of everlastingness.† This writer is equally skeptical as to the reward of well-doing, a doctrine which is preëminently Jewish. He does not believe in any "power that makes for righteousness." "There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the unclean, to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not, as is the good so is the sinner."‡ He does not glory in this fact, he bemoans it. "This is an evil among all things that take place under the sun, that there is one event to all."§ Such teaching is diametrically opposed to the Law

* "For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.—"Job xiv. 7, 10-12.

† "I said in mine heart concerning the sons of men, that God will prove them in order that they may see that they are like the beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; one lot befalleth both. As the one dieth, so doth the other. Yea, there is one spirit in them and a man hath no preëminence above a beast, for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of a man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of [a beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?"—Eccl. iii. 19-21.

‡ Eccl. ix. 2.

§ Eccl. ix. 3.

and the prophets, and we are not a little surprised that a book of this sort found its way into the canon. Its admission however is measurably explained when we remember that the book professes to be the work of Solomon. Its true date is but little more than 200 B. C. Taking into account the sad time in which this book was written, we are not surprised at its gloomy contents. Judea had been in the hands of the Lagidæ,* as the Egyptian branch of Alexander's successors is called, since the beginning of the third century B. C., and with the rest of Palestine had been a bone of contention between them and the Seleucidæ,† rulers of the Babylonish-Syrian division. Fierce battles were fought, and great distress fell upon the people. Finally in 203 B. C. "the King of the South" (Egypt), as he is designated in the book of Daniel, gives way to "the King of the North" (Syria), and the reign of the Seleucidæ is inaugurated.

At this date the Old Testament canon is almost closed. Religious writings, psalms, proverbs, histories, now begin to appear which have been accounted worthy of preservation, but which were not fortunate enough to be included among the sacred books. Some of these on any fair judgment must be pronounced superior to some of the same class which were admitted; and we can only attribute the exclusion to circumstances which happened to be influential at the time, and to the fact that under the Greek dominion books began to be greatly multiplied, making it necessary soon to shut the door altogether in order to

* From Lagus, the reputed father of Ptolemæus.

† Dynasty beginning with Seleucus.

save the Hebrew canon from the infinite dilution which befell the Hindu. The earliest and perhaps the noblest of these omitted works, is the *Proverbs of Jesus the son of Sirach*. This book is only a few years younger than *Ecclesiastes*, and is, we should say, every way worthier a place in the Bible. It is more bracing, more devout, more in the spirit of the old writings. Though classed among "the wise," the writer shows none of the indifference of the older makers of proverbs to the Law and the temple. He loves them both, and, in praising "wisdom," he is pleased to acknowledge that it comes through these. Wisdom is contained, he says,

"In the books of the covenants of God most high,
In the Law which Moses commanded
For a heritage unto the children of Israel."

There can hardly be any question that this book might have been in the Bible, if the writer had suppressed his own name, and put his words into the mouth of some ancient worthy.

We must look a little now to our history, which I apprehend, is getting less and less familiar as we approach the Christian era, and which it is especially necessary here to have in mind in order to understand the origin of the remaining books we have to consider. The troublous times of the last century had deprived the Jews of much of their national spirit. Many had taken up their residence in foreign parts, and in Palestine there had been a steady advance of Greek thought and customs. A gymnasium had been established at Jerusalem which

drew the people away from their religious duties. The high-priesthood was repeatedly sold by the King Antiochus Epiphanes to the man who would pay the most money for it. By the year 171 B. C., things had come to a frightful state of disorder. Armies, led by one and another deposed high priest, captured the city and massacred the inhabitants. Hired assassins made the life of every notable person insecure. Antiochus, pretending to punish these irregularities, marched an army into the city himself and plundered it, sparing not even the treasures of the temple. Two years after he sent Appollonius with an army, who made the city a terror to the inhabitants. The king now declared his purpose to abolish all peculiar orders of worship, and insisted that the whole kingdom should be one people, professing one common faith. He ordered an image of some god, probably Jupiter Capitolinus, to be set up in the temple at Jerusalem, which to the faithful Jew was the last extreme of cruelty. It is in reference to this the seventy-fourth Psalm seems to have been written :

“ O God ! why hast thou cast us off forever ?
Remember the people which thou didst purchase of old,
That Mount Zion where thou once did dwell !
Hasten thy steps to those utter desolations !
Everything in the sanctuary hath the enemy abused !
Thine enemies roar in the place of thine assemblies ;
Their own symbols have they set up for signs.
They have profaned and cast to the ground the dwelling-place of thy
name.”

The old spirit of devotion to Jahveh began to revive under the fire of persecution. When this onslaught commenced, Greek customs were quietly making considerable

inroads upon Judaism, and perhaps if force had not been used, the Jews might, in the course of a few centuries, have become absorbed into the larger world, as has been the case with other conquered tribes. Persecution was never more inexcusable than in the course of Greek civilization and it never more signally failed than in this case. The instant effect of coercion was the very opposite of what the king intended. We are told, and this accords with what we should expect, that many of the Jews yielded to the royal command and openly professed the cosmopolitan faith. Some, however, stood out, and among these an aged priest of distinction, named Mattathias, with his five sons. When the king's officers called on him for his submission they made large offers of reward if, without more compulsion, he would give in his adhesion to the gods whose worship their master had decreed. Mattathias refused downright in brave and noble words; and seeing an apostate Jew going "in the sight of all to sacrifice at the altar" which the king had built, he was filled with such indignation that he could not contain himself. He rushed upon the man and slew him then and there. And "the king's commissioner who compelled men to sacrifice he also killed and overturned the altar."* This was the signal of rebellion. The brave man went strait through the town, calling to him all who would defend their faith, and fled with them to the mountains. Other detachments went in other directions. One band of refugees a thousand strong was pursued by

* Macc. ii. 24, 25.

the king's soldiery, who, rightly presuming on the Jewish unwillingness to violate the Sabbath attacked them on that day. The result was the whole body stood and received their death without offering the least resistance. Mattathias saw that this scrupulousness about the Sabbath* would not do, and it was agreed that there should be no more folly of this sort. The old man proved a wise counselor, and his son Judas, afterward called Judas Maccabæus, soon showed the qualities of a brilliant leader. Upon the death of the father, which occurred shortly, this son became the head of the rebellion, and was soon able to bring about a very remarkable succession of events. He had only a small following, but in the first year (166 B. C.) he managed to defeat two armies that were sent against him. A much larger force under two distinguished generals was then sent to make doubly sure of reducing the rebellion, which was evidently assuming alarming proportions. The invading army surrounded Judas, and seemed in a fair way to bring him to terms. But by superior skill he contrived to give battle to his opponents separately at Emmaus, and put them both to flight. Lysias, the governor, then assumed command and marched out with a considerable force from Antioch. But he too received a crushing defeat at Bethzur, and was glad to get back to his capital. Maccabæus now turned his attention upon Jerusalem; entered the city and forced the garrison to take refuge in the citadel. There was

* This absurd excess of nicety about the Sabbath is one of the many signs of the change that had been brought about under priestly rule. The armies of the earlier time were trammelled by no such considerations.

great rejoicing at the coming of this hero of many battles, whom the people hailed as their deliverer. The city was once more purified of pagan altars and idols. Her enemies at bay, Israel seemed again about to take her place among the nations. The people were wild with delight, believing that the day of their redemption was drawing near. And all this had been the work of but three years. In fact the temple was renewed, the desecrated altar taken down and a new one built, in time to hold the solemn re-consecration on the anniversary of the erection of the image of Jupiter Capitolinus three years before. The one hundred and eighteenth Psalm was probably composed for this occasion and sung by the temple-choir :

“ This is the day which Jahveh hath made ;
Let us then rejoice and be glad in it.
O Jahveh, send now safety !
O Jahveh, send now prosperity !

“ Blessed is he that cometh in Jahveh’s name ;
We bless thee out of Jahveh’s house.
Jahveh is God and hath showed us light.
Bind the sacrifices with cords
Unto the horns of the altar.

“ Thou art my strength and I will praise thee,
My God, and I will exalt thee.
Praise Jahveh, for he is good,
For his mercy endureth forever.”

So brilliant a success against such odds has rarely been recorded. The political independence was not to be of long continuance, but Judas Maccabæus had fought more especially for *religious* liberty, and this was permanently secured. Antiochus Epiphanes died the next year (163

B. C.), and no one took up his infamous task. So long as the state stood the right of the Jew to worship Jahveh was never again violated. The effect of this struggle for a holy cause we may well believe was to deepen the attachment of the people to the Law and the temple. The tendency to Greek customs which had been trenching steadily upon Judaism since Alexander's conquest, was arrested; the party which had stood firm for the national religion took the lead of the state, and Israel entered upon another epoch of her existence. A few psalms date from this period,* and a remarkable attempt was made at the revival of prophecy, of which I shall speak in my next lecture.

The Maccabean age, so brilliant in its triumphs of arms, was a desperate and fruitless struggle of the Jewish nation to realize, in contravention of facts of which the prophets had taken no account, the dream of coming glory that for centuries had hung like a golden sunset on the horizon of Jewish thought. Under the spell of their persistent hope the national spirit gave forth a final gleam in the heroism of Judas and his brothers; but Israel had fallen upon troublous times. External dangers were matched by internal discord. Ezra's formalism had brought forth its legitimate fruit in endless minute regulations touching eating and drinking and every other act of a man's life; hampering the thought and wasting the energies of the people; involving them in grave disputes about the most trivial matters, while great questions of truth and right were all

* Ps. xliv. in addition to those already mentioned.

untouched. Ritualism and devotion to the letter of the law had frittered away the moral life of the people. Even the prophecy which sprung out of this period has lost the moral tone. Daniel is not presented for righteousness' sake, but *for the sake of the ritual*. He prophesies, but with none of the old denunciation of wrong, none of the old pleading for justice and mercy.

But through a somewhat absurd care for the letter great thoughts were preserved to be awakened to life again in due time. "The books" became sacred, and so they have been kept. Thousands and, if we may believe Josephus, millions of Jews were already dispersed through many lands, there to be acted upon by the world's thought, and hold up to a wider scrutiny Israel's Law and faith. The sacred writings found their way into the Greek tongue through the enterprise of the Jews in Alexandria, and though primarily intended for the use of Greek-speaking Jews, the great translation soon acquired an influence and a fame. The interaction of Jewish with Gentile thought, notwithstanding the check it received from the Maccabean revolt, could not be suspended. Judas himself was the first to revive the spirit of fellowship with other nations by sending an embassy to Rome. Civilization must have its way, and other factors than Jewish must be admitted into the final religious philosophy. And still the Jew will have more to give than to receive.

FIFTH LECTURE.

LAST OF THE OLD JEWISH WRITINGS.

SOMETHING has been seen of what Judas Maccabæus did in council and in field for Israel in the heroic years 166–160 B. C. We have now to turn our thought to the work of another patriot who has not even left his name behind him, but whose words have had a singular potency for good and ill for the last two thousand years. If Judas gave his life for his country, he at least secured himself a perpetual remembrance wherever valor is admired or devotion honored ; but he of whose work we now come to speak gave himself to oblivion that his word might abide and be strong. Not in his own name, or as of his own time, could a prophet discourse at that late day. The sense of the Divine nearness had given way to the sense of the Divine majesty, and it had grown presumptuous to say, “Thus saith Jahveh.” One who should do so would be looked upon as a fanatic and set aside. The soul stirred to prophetic utterance, to have that utterance effective, must have recourse to an artifice which we have seen to have been already extensively employed by the writers of the sacred books,—he must put his words into the mouth of some man who lived in the days when prophecy was in order.

We know from Ezekiel that there was a notable man by the name of *Daniel*, living presumably in the time of the captivity at Babylon.* Doubtless there were in circulation many legends about this man and his doings. It occurred to some literary genius among the followers of Judas Maccabæus to gather up these legends in the name of the hero himself, enlarging upon them to suit the purposes of the hour, and adding a work of prophecy as from the pen of this same Daniel. The great victories of Judas ripened this scheme, and gave to its execution an unexpected power. Still the writer is conscious that he lives long subsequent to the age of prophecy, and he dare not set out independently, but starts from a prediction of Jeremiah.† He finds that Jeremiah had fixed the duration of the captivity at seventy years.‡ At the expiration of this term the people should return and enter upon a period of unexampled prosperity. There had been a partial return from Babylonia at about the specified time, but the rest of the prediction had sadly failed. The Jews had occupied Judea only by sufferance, and had been in a state of vassalage, first under Persia, then under Greece, falling then to the Lagidæ and finally to the Seleucidæ; so prolonging through some three hundred and seventy years the state of bondage. It is conceived therefore by the author—in the true millenarian spirit of to-day—that

* Ezek. xiv. 14, 20; xxviii. 3.

† Dan. ix. 2. It is to be observed that the writer here speaks of “the scriptures” (as the rendering should be instead of “the book”) *indicating that at the time of this writing the canon was formed* (see also x. 21.) *and the prophets included in it.* This certainly was not until long after the captivity.

‡ Jer. xxv. 11; xxix. 10; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.

Jeremiah when he said "years" didn't mean years, but sabbath years, sevenfold years; so that to get at the time of deliverance we must multiply seventy by seven, making four hundred and ninety years. But this is rather too much, and as seven is a sacred number it is allowable to deduct seven times seven years,* which will leave 441 years from Jeremiah's prediction to the fulfilment. The prediction was made in 604 B.C.† Subtract 441 years and you have the year 163 B.C. for the final glorification of Israel. This would be within two years of the time of writing this book, and considering the victories that Israel were achieving under Judas Maccabæus, and bating this cabalistic deduction from numbers, the prospect could not have appeared, to one partaking the enthusiasm of the struggle, at all improbable. In the year 170 the high-priest Onias III.‡ had been murdered, and this date is fixed on as the beginning of the last week of years. Three and a half years after, that is in "the middle of the week," the temple service is arrested and the altar of

* Dan. ix. 25. "From the going forth of a word to restore and to build Jerusalem till an anointed one, a prince, shall be seven weeks." That is, from Jeremiah's prediction to Cyrus shall be 49 years, putting Cyrus at $604-49=555$ B.C.; which is well enough, as at that time Cyrus was looming up as the coming man. He had been called the "anointed of Jahveh" by the Deutero-Isaiah, and, being "a prince," answers the designation perfectly. Instead of "an anointed one," we have in the common version, "the Messiah," which has led into the wildest vagaries of interpretation. Kuenen says that the use of the word Messiah as a designation of the expected Christ is without Old Testament authority.

† That is, reference is had to Jer. xxv. 11, 12.

‡ V. 26. "And after sixty-two weeks shall an anointed one be cut off, and there is none for him," none to take his place. $62 \times 7 = 434$; deducting this from the date of Jeremiah's prediction, 604 B.C., and we have 170 B.C., the year that Onias III. was killed. The man appointed in his place

Jupiter Capitolinus is set up.* Therefore, the writer augurs, this mischief and misery can last only three and a half years longer. That this prediction nerved the patriots to greater deeds of valor, and helped to bring them victorious into Jerusalem within the specified time, there can be no doubt.†

But the writer puts all he says into the mouth of Daniel away back in the captivity. The whole course of Israel's history and of the world's changes from that time down to 165 B.C. is set down with historical fidelity. We have the four great empires sketched, Babylonia, Media, Persia, Greece; we have careful delineations of the successors of Alexander so that we can recognise them every one. Antiochus Epiphanes is referred to at great length. After Greece, Israel was to rise a yet greater glory than any of these and achieve an imperishable dominion. Here the writer no longer has history to guide him and is really speaking prophetically. His language becomes

was a foreigner, and obtained the post from Antiochus Epiphanes by bribery, as did also his successor; so to the Jew there was no lawful high-priest or "anointed one." "And the city and the sanctuary shall be profaned by the people of a prince (Antiochus Epiph.) who shall come;" "and to the end there is war." A faithful description of what ensued. See pp. 107-110, and for full account see 1 Mac.

* V. 27. "The middle of the week shall cause sacrifice and oblations to cease." The middle of the seven years between 170 and 163 B.C., which accurately defines the time when Antiochus suspended the Jahveh worship, and erected the heathen altar described in 1 Maccabees as "the abomination of desolation."

† We must not overlook the fact, however, that in this first actual prediction the prophet failed. It is as much a "miss" in such a matter to set the time too long as to set it too short. It was not three years and a half that the temple was devoted to the pagan worship, but less than three years.

more vague and exalted, but this does not hide the fact that *when he reaches this date, 165 B.C., his vision fails*. He sees nothing of the Roman power which actually succeeded the Greek. He predicts the dominion of Israel* which was never realized. It was to follow directly on the conclusion of the "weeks of years,"† which he fixes at 163 B.C.; and it was to come by the intervention of the angel Michael.‡ Many who were in their graves were to be raised up§ and a day of judgment was immediately to follow.

Thus an examination of the prophetic part of this book sufficiently indicates its late origin. But this judgment is strongly confirmed by a glance at the narrative portion. Here the first thing that strikes us is the multiplicity of most amazing miracles. As before observed,|| such stories are not related by eye-witnesses. It is not too much to say of the legends of Daniel that they could not have taken their present shape until three or four hundred years after Daniel was dead. Let me cite some of them that you may recall their general character. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream which he wants interpreted, and calls in his magicians. But when they have gathered he has forgotten his dream, and in his perplexity requires them to tell him the dream and the interpretation too, threatening, in case of failure, to put the whole of them to death. Of course they cannot do it, but Daniel comes forward and does it perfectly.¶ The king is satisfied that he has found

* Chap. vii. 27.

§ Chap. xii. 2.

† Chap. vii. 25.

|| See note p. 34.

‡ Chap. xii. 1.

¶ Chap. ii.

a prophet, and glorifies the god of Daniel.* And yet he proceeds at once to make a colossal image of himself for the people to worship, and when the three friends of Daniel will not bow down, he has them cast into a flaming furnace, where they walk about in the midst of the glowing fire without the slightest inconvenience, although the heat is so great as to kill the guards who thrust them into the furnace.† King Nebuchadnezzar was a successful monarch, and he became very proud. It was necessary to humble this lofty spirit; so he was compelled to lay aside the sceptre and go into the fields and eat grass like an ox for seven years, “till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.”‡ Finally, Daniel himself is cast into a den of lions, which proved as harmless to him as kittens, although, when some other men were thrown in, the lions seized and devoured them before ever they reached the bottom of the den.§ Events occurring within the life-time of the narrator never shape themselves in stories of this kind. Only as things are seen through an object-glass centuries long, are they distorted in this fantastic fashion. What is more, Ezekiel, who knows Daniel, and who lived and wrote in Babylonia, knows nothing about any such marvelous proceedings as these. Nor does Ezra, or Nehemiah, or any one of the writers of that age.

* Chap. ii. 47.

† Chap. iii.

‡ Chap. iv. 33.

§ Chap. vi. One of the best comments I remember having heard on this lion-taming business is in a piece of negro minstrelsy that has been very popular. The lines are,

“ If de Lord ’liver Daniel from de lions’ den,
Then why not you and me ? ”

I do not see but that the conundrum must be given up.

Not to mention other considerations, the part played by angels in this book is a sure mark of its late origin. The writer is having at every turn the vision of an angel who "touches" him. Thus he says, "While I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation; and he informed me, and talked with me," *etc.* This is not the old prophetic style, but belongs to a later order of thought. Since the return from the captivity, Jahveh has grown in majesty and greatness at the expense of the old sense of his nearness. *Then* he spoke familiarly with his prophets; *now* he maintains a royal reserve, and communicates with men through messengers. The long flight of Gabriel suggests Mahomet and his memorable journey with the same individual.

A very important fact in relation to this book is that it announces some of the doctrines of the New Testament. Beside its introduction of angels, which is so constant a feature of the Christian Scriptures, it has its "Son of Man,"—teaches immortality and the resurrection of the body—proclaims the imminency of the final judgment,—holds out everlasting rewards and punishments. The book of *Revelation* is only another *Daniel* somewhat longer drawn, with the beasts multiplied and the visions otherwise exaggerated. And the epistles and gospels stand on doctrines set forth in this strange prophecy. Thus, as we approach the Christian era, we find ideas be-

coming current which render the words of Jesus but the natural outcome of his time.

So extended a consideration has been given to the book of Daniel not on account of its intrinsic worth, but in view of the disproportionate estimation it has received in the Christian world. Not all the rest of the Bible together has been the source of so many vagaries concerning the ever immediate future. It has been the horn-book of the millenarians of every age, and such an air of mystery has gathered about it as strongly to repel most other readers. If, as the writer says, "the visions of his head troubled him," much more have they proved troublesome to others. One feels a little afraid of the horned beasts which figure with such terrible effect. But, now the wizard spirit is cast out, I am greatly mistaken if some are not stimulated to read the book afresh, which in the new view they will find by no means so hard to understand. Sunday-school children can figure on the "three score and two weeks," and the "time and times and half a time," with interest and profit, so long as it is understood that no magical horoscope is cast, and that the events described, so far as they have any counterparts in the actual world, took place before the writing of the book.

The Old Testament canon was virtually closed before *Daniel* appeared, as is indicated by the fact that quite a charming story of domestic life, known as the book of *Tobit*, which seems to have been written a few years earlier, was not admitted. But the book of Daniel made a strong appeal to Jewish patriotism; met the demand of

the hour, and, as by a *coup de main*, forced its way into the canon; whereupon the door was finally closed and bolted.

The remaining books we have to consider are called "apocryphal"—a word that has come to mean doubtful or spurious. Its proper sense is *hidden*. Of the apocryphal books commonly found in the bible between the two Testaments, all except *First* and *Second Esdras* and *The Prayer of Manasses* are held canonical in the Catholic church. The Anglican and Lutheran churches bind them up "for instruction;" but by other orthodox authorities they are rejected altogether; and hence the impression has been created that these writings are a sort of bogus scripture. This is a most mischievous conception of these books, as it tends to keep alive the absurd theory that down to a certain date (nobody knows when or why) what the Jews wrote was divine inspiration, when all at once it ceased to have any such character! As we have seen, the literature of Israel steadily declined in quality from the classic period which preceded and included the captivity; but there was certainly no sudden break-down between the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. The chronologies of these two divisions interlace each other. That is to say, though the apocryphal books are generally *younger*, some of them are *older* than some parts of the Old Testament. In respect of intrinsic value, there is a similar relation. Generally the Apocrypha may be called inferior; but there certainly are portions which are superior to some portions of the canonical scriptures. An

illustration of this has already been given* in comparing Ecclesiastes with the Proverbs of Jesus ben Sirach, written about the same time. Another still stronger case is to be met with in 1 Maccabees, compared with whatever history-book of the Bible you please. To bring out in a strong light this faithful record of Judean events for forty years after the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes, compare it with the pretended account of affairs in Babylon given in the book of Daniel.

There was no sudden change in the current of Jewish literature in the second century B. C. which rendered the waters muddy that before were pure and holy. Books of piety, of history, of poetry and legend, kept on being written. Considerable additions were made to existing books; old stories reappeared in new dress, decked out with the fancies in which the eastern mind makes haste to screen every feature of reality; but in this there was no great departure from the methods of preceding time. The same passion held on with the writers—the passion for hiding behind some already famous name.

By the close of the second century B. C., Alexandria had become a centre of Jewish influence and learning second only to Jerusalem itself. The Jews living there had adopted the Greek language, and had translated the sacred book into that tongue. To these they made some additions. It had already become a reproach to the book of Esther that no mention is made there of the name of God. An Alexandrian Jew, to make up for this defect,

* See p. 106,

produced several supplementary chapters of Esther, in which the name of deity occurs over forty times. From Alexandria also came three distinct additions to the book of Daniel—*The song of the Three Holy Children*, the stories of *Susanna*, and *Bel and the Dragon*. The three holy children are the three friends of Daniel subjected to the ordeal of the fiery furnace. To emphasize the perfect security of these men in the midst of the flames, the writer conceives the idea of putting into their mouth a song! Susanna is a falsely accused woman, to whom rescue comes through the shrewdness of Daniel in cross-examining the witnesses. Bel and the dragon are idols of the Babylonians which the writer, after the manner of the Jews of his time,* and also following some of the earlier writers,† identifies with the god they represent, and so is easily able to make their worshipers out to be fools. Sometime in the first century B. C., somebody undertook to rewrite the book of *Ezra*, fusing with it part of *Chronicles*, making the *First book of Esdras*. About the same time may have been written the very striking fiction of *Judith*, familiar to all lovers of art. Three other books of Maccabees were also produced one after another, going over part of the same ground with the first, and weaving in a mass of visions and marvels which add nothing to our knowledge of the Maccabees. We have also a scrap of writing calling itself *The Prayer of Manasses*. Manasses, or Manasseh, was the king who undid the reformation of

* See the "Epistle of Jeremy;" Wisdom of Solomon xiii.-xix.

† Isa. xl., seq.; Jer. x. 1-16; Ps. cxv. 4-8; cxxxv. 15-18.

his father Hezekiah, and went to quite a Solomonic extreme of liberality toward all the gods of heathendom. He was a very happy and prosperous king, contrary to the Jewish idea of what ought to have happened to him ; and so the story was gotten up that he was captured and taken to Babylon, and there this penitential prayer is put into his mouth. As has been observed by Mr. Chadwick, this is an early instance of that sort of pious fraud which has been repeated in the stories of the death-bed repentance of Paine, Voltaire and other noted unbelievers.

After the triumph of Judas Maccabæus in 163 B. C., Judea maintained a nominal independence for one hundred years. Among the far-sighted acts of that hero was the sending an embassy to Rome, the account of which in 1 Maccabees cannot be read now without peculiar sensations. It was the first contact of Jerusalem with the power which would one day bring her outwardly to the dust only to yield in turn to the spirit of her prophets and of her last and greatest teacher. The embassy was successful and an offensive and defensive alliance was formed. Not every Jew of the time had breadth of mind to approve this policy, and the compact which saved his country may very likely have been the cause of the apparent defection in his army which lost him his last battle and his life. But Rome remained friendly, and had not the Jews in the centuries of their absorption in matters ecclesiastical lost the faculty of political organization and developed among themselves bitter sectarian rivalries and hatreds, the state might have stood undisturbed as long

at least as the Roman dominion lasted. But after Hyrcanus I. things went rapidly to wreck. Fierce and bloody strifes ensued; usurpers and tyrants ruled the country; and finally affairs fell into such frightful disorder that Pompey, in 63 B. C., reduced Judea to a Roman province. A priestly nation had proved in the end incapable of civil government.

The great expectations of *Daniel* had not been met, either at the end of two years from the date of the writing, or afterwards. Indeed the impossibility of any such results had become more apparent in view of the rise of the all conquering power of Rome.

Scarcely less suggestive of Christian doctrine is the third book of the *Sibylines*. The Sibyls were properly pagan seers, but their oracles were sometimes of a character to commend them to the liberal Jew, and the idea was evolved that the pagans, having all descended with the Jews from Noah, who was unquestionably a man of God, it was not improbable that they might have received from him some measure of the true religion, and therefore their oracles might not be without a divine import. As if to mark this incipient fellowship of worshipers on the basis of a uniformity of faith beneath all differences, there arose among the Jews a sibyl who foretells a golden age in which the Messianic hope shall be realized, the wicked destroyed, root and branch, all kingly rule overthrown, the heathen converted and Judah built up into great splendor. Already, a hundred years before Paul, we have a hint of the final enlargement of Israel's religion to suit the needs of the whole world.

The book of *Enoch* is another Apocalypse coming out of this troubled time. The writer had studied *Daniel*, and in common with many others had felt keen disappointment to find the predictions of that book all failing of fulfilment after the year 165 B. C. He gave the cabalistic numbers another shake, and behold, the seventy weeks of *Daniel* became "seventy periods of heathen rulers!" When Israel had counted these seventy oppressors, the end of her captivity would come. This work quite outdoes all the others in its claim of antiquity, purporting to come from Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," the father of the world-renowned Methusalah. The book is quoted in the New Testament, and quoted in such a way as to sanction this claim of antiquity.* There is no question but that Jude (infallibly inspired!) really thought that Enoch wrote the book. With this good send-off *Enoch* ought to have had a place in the canon; but it failed of this, except with the Abyssinian Christians, to whom we are indebted for its preservation. It is a document of some size, running through over a hundred chapters, and fairly anticipates many of the doctrines of Christianity. "Here we find," says Martineau, "a century before the first line of the New Testament was written, all the chief features of its doctrine respecting the 'end of the world,' and the 'coming of the Son of man;' the same theatre, Jerusalem;—the same time relatively to the writer, the immediate generation,—the hour at hand; the same har-

* Jude 14. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, 'Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints,'"
&c.

bingers,—wars and rumors of wars, and the gathering of Gentile armies against the elect,—the same deliverance for the elect,—the advent of the Messiah with the holy angels; the same decisive solemnity,—the Son of Man on the throne of his glory, with all nations gathered before him;—the same award,—unbelievers to a pit of fire in the valley of Hinnom, and the elect to the halls of the kingdom, to eat and drink at Messiah's table;—the same accession to the society,—by the first resurrection sending up from Hades the souls of the pious dead; the same renovation of the earth,—the old Jerusalem thrown away and replaced by a new and heavenly;—the same metamorphosis of mortal men, to be as the angels;—the same end to Messiah's time,—the second resurrection, and the second judgment of eternity, consigning the wicked angels to their doom;—and the same new creation, transforming the heavenly world that it may answer to Paradise below. Here, in a book to which the New Testament itself appeals, we have the very drama of 'last things' which reappears in the book of *Revelation*, and in portions of the Gospel."

There is a very considerable gap between the Old Testament and the New if we pass from *Malachi* to *Matthew*. But in this interval a great deal was written which if taken into account makes the Bible continuous from first to last; explicable in each of its parts as the natural outcome of the ever changing conditions of the Jewish church and state. So far from appearing miraculous for its startling novelty, the New Testament, after reading the writ-

ings of the two preceding centuries, seems to be just what might be expected to come next.

For even with *Enoch* we are not at the end of these apocryphal books which originated not far from the Christian era. They are one and all apocalyptic, for Judea had fallen now into such utter helplessness before the power of Rome that no Jew had the heart to write of much else than the impending destruction of the universe, out of which, by some miracle, Israel was to come forth renewed and glorified. Even this hope was getting so desperate that it could only be floated on the prestige of some ancient and honored name. Enoch, Ezra and Daniel had already been made use of; another set of pseudonymous writings made bold to appropriate the name of Moses, the sanctified hero of the nation, in the book of *Jubilees*, the *Ascension of Moses* and the *Apocalypse of Moses*. It has been supposed that Jude obtained from the "Ascension of Moses" his statement about the dispute between Michael and Satan concerning the body of Moses; which if true, as seems likely, is only another indication of how much that writer leaned upon the then recent Jewish literature that has not even been accorded a place in our Apocrypha.

Besides the books already mentioned, dating not far from the Christian era, and influential in forming the sentiment out of which Jesus and the first Christian writings arose, it needs to mention the *Talmud*, which had been forming for three hundred years—a body of doctrine, precept and comment based on the law of Moses (so-called),

but suited to the ever-varying conditions of life. This is an extensive literature in itself, already largely developed by the time of Christ, and an object of study to every thoughtful Jew. Among the most distinguished contributors to the Talmud was Hillel. In him, both Jesus and Paul found many of their thoughts already formulated. Hillel said, "Love peace, and seek after it; love mankind and bring them to the Law." Once, says the Talmud, when a heathen asked Hillel to show the whole Jewish religion in a few words, he answered: "Do not unto others that which thou wouldst not should be done to thee; this is the whole extent of the law; all the rest is merely the explanation of it; go now and learn to understand that."

The common presumption is that there is nothing in the Old Testament younger than about 400 B. C. This is a mistake, as it now appears that the books of Daniel, Chronicles, Esther and Ecclesiastes are much younger. But why stop short with the Jewish writings even at 165 B. C.? Why, indeed, but to throw an air of mystery about the origin of the New Testament doctrines and precepts? When once we have read the intervening books between Malachi and Matthew, or to speak more intelligently, between *Daniel* (the latest portion of the Old Testament), and Paul's Epistles (the earliest writings in the New Testament), we are conscious of no abrupt revolution in thought when we come to the latter. All the ages of the Jewish history are a preparation for the gospel; but none of them more emphatically so than the

century just preceding the appearance of the gospel. If we would have the New Testament explicable, we must acquaint ourselves with what went just before it. We shall find then that no man was ever more clearly the natural product of his time and race than was Jesus ; and that gospel, and epistles, and apocalypse are as intimately linked with antecedent literature as we have found any book of the Old Testament to be. This will be more specifically pointed out when we come to consider the Christian scriptures ; but as it is a fact persistently overlooked in the interest of a miraculous theory of religious history, attention must be called to it as we pass. The step from the doctrines of the Old Testament to those of the New, considered as the achievement of one man, would indeed be inexplicable ; but no such step was taken. The transition of the doctrines since called Christian was gradual, beginning before the writing of Daniel, and becoming especially marked in the later apocryphal books.

It is a fact not to be overlooked, that at the Christian era the Jews on account of the discouraging aspect of their national affairs had taken up their residences in large numbers in other parts. They were in all the cities of Greece, in Egypt, in Rome ; carrying everywhere their peculiar faith, though holding it out of Palestine with a less extravagant contempt for other religions. The strict Jew was not a missionary, sought no proselytes ; and yet converts to Judaism were made, sometimes even in the very highest circles. Monobazus, ruler of a province on the Tigris, and all his house, became converts to Judaism

through acquaintance with a Jewish merchant, who was liberal enough not to require strict compliance with the letter of the law; and this royal family in a Gentile country remained to their death faithful adherents to the Jewish religion, and were finally buried in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Such facts indicate that the rigor of the ceremonial law was much abated among the Jews living abroad, and that they only awaited the influence of a vigorous leader to drop altogether the one distinctive rite which separated them from the world, and enter upon a grand missionary movement for the conversion of mankind. The most exalted and spiritual prophecies of Israel's final enlargement represent the whole human race as coming to the service of Jahveh and participating in his favour. Jahveh speaks by the voice of Zephaniah; "Then will I give to the nations other, pure lips, that they may call upon the name of Jahveh and serve him with one consent."* And there are not wanting indications that the conversion of the nations to righteousness was to be effected directly by the Jewish people. "Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: in those days shall ten men out of all languages of the nations take hold of one Jew, and say to him: we will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you."† Israel owes this duty to the world, and although other duties strongly conflict with this so that it cannot constantly be set forth, we come here and there upon the unmistakable enunciation of it. Israel is the servant of Jahveh, and this is the character of the faithful servant;

* Zeph. iii. 9.

† Zech. viii. 23.

“Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul is well pleased; I put my spirit upon him; *judgment shall he preach to the nations*. He shall not faint nor be crushed till he have established judgment in the earth, and the dwellers on the sea-coast wait for his instructions.”*

These outreaching and inclusive sentiments found some slight response, we may believe, among the Jews who were dispersed through the Gentile world. Prosperous and happy abroad, the thought of an actual return to Palestine grew less and less inviting as it became more and more improbable. The Messianic hope took on a spiritual cast and a world-wide application. Israel, through whose faith and struggle the blessedness was to come, was indeed to be the chief figure in the great consummation; but mankind at large were also to be partakers in the glory that was to be revealed. In the book of Enoch the Messianic hope is of the strongest, while the personal Messiah, the Prince of Israel, plays a subordinate and entirely unessential part. The leading features of the prophecy are the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked in a lake of fire and the conversion of heathendom to the knowledge of the true and only God.

We see therefore that the existence of Jewish communities at all the centres of life, in Asia Minor, in Egypt, in Greece, in Italy, and even in Spain, afforded the best possible conditions for a great missionary movement when the fulness of time should come.

Happily there is another important work left us of a

* Isa. xlii. 1.

spiritual character which indicates the ideas current among the Jews at the time of the Christian era. It is called the *Wisdom of Solomon*. The Proverbs and the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes had had such great good fortune sailing under the name of Solomon that some one thought to try the same experiment again with a book of "Wisdom." In merit this work may yield to Proverbs, but certainly not to the other Solomonic books; and there can hardly be any doubt, had not the destruction of Jerusalem and the final extinction of the Jewish state shortly supervened, the Wisdom of Solomon would have found its way into the canon and been reckoned to-day part of the "Word of God." The assertion is made that "immortality was brought to light through the Gospel;" but the Gospel contains no such clear affirmations of immortality as does the Book of Wisdom. What the New Testament doctrine of the soul is has always been in dispute, many supposing that it makes immortality a reward for obedience. But the writer is unequivocal. He says, "God created man to be immortal and made him an image of his own eternity."* Such an utterance implies the reading of other than Hebrew books, and shows how at the Christian era the thought of Greece had mingled with that of Israel. The poverty of the canonical scriptures in bold and bracing assurances of a future life is made apparent when one goes to look for suitable selections to be read in a funeral service. I have never seen a set of selections for this purpose which might not be improved by substituting for canonical scripture some verses

* Chap. ii. 23

from this book. For my part I would sooner dispense with either one of the Testaments at a funeral than with the Wisdom of Solomon. And this not merely because of the stress it puts upon the idea of personal, natural immortality, but mainly because the writer goes further and anticipates Emerson's well-known words :—

“What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent.”

and says, “Righteousness is immortal.”

We are now at the end of a much too rapid review of the Jewish Scriptures. I have not hesitated, in following the line of the “new criticism,” to speak plainly of the questionable modes by which some of the books acquired the “sacred” distinction; the disingenuous writing of history in the form of prophecy, and yet worse distortion of history in the interest of a cause; but when all has been said, if you who have followed me through have not acquired a new interest in the Bible from this investigation, then I must say, your experience has been very different from mine. The main thing toward making any book interesting is to make it intelligible; and it is not too much to say in these days a work remains unintelligible so long as an element of supernaturalism is involved in its consideration. As often as the miracle comes in, common sense goes out. Blind assertion and stubborn denial are alike fatal to any profitable exercise of thought. We have lived to see the successful beginning of a positive, constructive order of criticism which undertakes to tell how the Bible was written rather than how it was *not* written; what the Bible is rather than what it is not,

SIXTH LECTURE.

THE WRITINGS OF PAUL.

IN entering upon the consideration of the New Testament we shall miss much of an historical and dramatic character which has heretofore helped to relieve an otherwise dry and forbidding subject. The writing of the Christian Scriptures, though stretching over a much longer period than is commonly supposed, probably did not cover more than one hundred and twenty-five years. In that period the only political event which greatly influenced these writings is the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and this affects only the later and pseudonymic portions. Moreover there is a much greater prejudice in the way of a critical handling of this part of the Bible. Christians not unnaturally have come to reckon it as the most sacred part,* and to insist, however it may fare with the rest of the books, that here at any rate we are dealing with something supernatural. It is unpleasant to say anything to disturb this complacent conception, but truth requires us to speak no less plainly than before.

* It is noteworthy that in this there has been a complete revolution since Christianity passed out of Jewish control. To several generations of Christians the only sacred scriptures were the Old Testament. The earliest instance in which the word *scripture* is applied to a New Testament writing is 2 Peter iii. 16; and this book was not written till towards the close of the second century.

From the book of Daniel and the Apocrypha which we have last considered, we pass to the New Testament without the sense of an abrupt and mysterious change either in style of writing or form of doctrine. The book of *Revelation* is after the fashion of the preceding apocalypses; epistles and gospels repeat in numerous instances the precepts and the phraseology of the previous writings. The obvious fact is that we have here a natural continuation of the older Jewish literature.

But before we proceed to the books themselves it will be best to consider the conditions out of which they were produced.

As has already been pointed out* many influences had conspired in the last centuries of the Jewish state to modify the customs and the ideas of the people. The march of external civilization had told at last even upon the most exclusive of nations, and the Jew had embodied in creed and ceremony much that never originated in Judea. Especially had the outside world modified the thought of great numbers of Jews who had taken up their residence in foreign parts. Knowledge of mankind revealed to the Jew the absurdity of his own pretensions. He could not avoid seeing the presumptuousness of the supposition that the God and Father of all men cares only for the Jews; and so there began to be expressed before the Christian era the belief that the heathen were to be converted to the service of Israel's God. As the hope of national glory declined, a vague anticipation awoke that

* See Fifth Lecture.

Israel was to have a spiritual leadership, and bring mankind to the observance of the divine law. Hopes of this kind had even been announced with some distinctness, and had opened the way to another and vital consideration, pointing yet more clearly to the Gospel, and requiring our actual attention.

Before Judaism can be made a world-religion it must be reformed. In fact it had become too much a thing of ceremony to satisfy even a Jew. There was a felt need of a return to first principles. The great prophets began to read with a new ardor, and their contempt of empty formalities found some responses across an interval of seven centuries. Reformers arose who went through the country proclaiming in the old prophetic spirit the need of inward purification. The influence of the book of Daniel and the other apocalypses came in to speed on this work with a sense that the time was short. In the century before Christ societies were formed on the avowed purpose of attaining a higher spiritual life, through self-denial and other exercises not set down in the ritual.

Of course these tendencies had their poorest showing in Jerusalem, which was the seat of formalism, while in the outlying districts, where the temple had less influence and where foreign ideas had more ingress, they had become exceedingly strong. Especially was this the case in Galilee, the part of Palestine most accessible to the Greeks,* and there, among other reforming teachers, arose one whose name has since been given to the religion pro-

* "Galilee of the Gentiles," Matt. iv. 15,

fessed by the bestpart of the world. Jesus was first of all a Jewish reformer. He was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the great prophets who made the conduct of life the essential thing in religion ; impatient like them of the everlasting prayers and other rigmarole of an external devotion, and filled even more than they with a sweet and tender sympathy for human woes. His doctrine was not new or strange. Other men of the same and the preceding generation had said much the same things. The people were used to these religious talks, and many of his precepts had long passed as proverbs among them. They were astonished only at his boldness in amending the Mosaic commands, and at his undisguised contempt for the hierarchy. They had known reformers before, but this was the most radical of all. Tradition has it that there was at the time a strong expectation of the Prince and Redeemer of Israel ; that the mother of Jesus had the conviction, as no doubt many other mothers had, that her son was to be the long-looked-for Messiah. The belief that he was the Christ who should come appears finally to have fastened itself in his own mind. This was generally reckoned an extravagance, and "the multitude" who heard his preaching gladly were nevertheless not prepared to support such a pretension. It was extremely obnoxious to the authorities in Jerusalem, who were already incensed at his scorn of their traditions, and in a short time they contrived measures to put him out of the way.

But in the course of three years some faithful followers had been secured, who began to preach that Christ had already come and had inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth. His utterances were taken up with enthusiasm and repeated through the land. The martyrdom of the Master gave an impulse to his movement, and led to developments in it of which he did not dream. It does not appear that Jesus or anybody in the lifetime of Jesus contemplated abolishing the distinction between Jews and other people. The most that can be said is that in him Jewish exclusiveness was very much mitigated. He did not scruple to sit with publicans, or to converse on terms of comparative equality with Samaritans; he could recognise a high order of faith even in a foreigner. Still there are indications enough that, like the most liberal of the Jews before him, he still retained a strong preference for his own race, and regarded his mission as being essentially to the Jews.*

When, however, the hand of persecution was laid upon the followers of this teacher in Palestine, some of the leaders betook themselves to the cities of the west, where, as we have seen, very many Jews were already sojourning. Among these the preaching of the gospel, as the doctrines of Jesus were called, was more readily received; and there it became possible to widen the movement by proposing to sink the distinction between Jew and Gentile and make the gospel the basis for a grand missionary

* "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. xv. 24. See also Matt. x. 5-7; Mark vii. 27.

movement for the conversion of the world to the faith of Israel.

This was the radical step. In teaching, ethical or doctrinal, the Christians had little that was new. Their assertion that Messiah had already come was indeed a novel feature, but this novelty was modified by the expectation that he was *coming again very shortly*, and by the fact that they applied to this second coming the very language of prophecy in which all Jews found the promise of Messiah. Add to this that the anticipation of a personal Messiah had to a certain extent been overshadowed by the hope of an era of general blessedness so that it made less difference where this personal leadership was placed, in the past or in the future, and we can see that the admission that Jesus was the Christ set no great strain upon the Jewish mind. But to drop all distinctive rites and ceremonies and stand upon equality and in fellowship with other men, was a step of no little difficulty. Still there had been, as we have seen,* in the course of Jewish history adjustments to conditions and compromises with paganism almost as sweeping. To the Jew outside of Palestine, at any rate, the recognition of Israel's God and Israel's law and prophets by the pagan world, which now for the first time began to seem possible, might appear a sufficient tribute to the "chosen race" and do more for the glorification of Israel than would ever be secured by obstructing this possible conversion of the heathen with any impossible conditions.

* pp. 41, 58, 93, 99,

King Monobazus and his house had in a previous generation been admitted to the Jewish faith without undergoing the rite which marks a Jew;* many who heard the preaching of Judaism from Christian teachers were ready to be gathered in on like terms.

So almost at the outset the Christian movement encountered this grave question of the perpetuation of the Jewish rites. To renounce them had about it certainly, from a Jewish point of view, something of rashness. Jesus had never counselled it.† He had himself bowed to the established ceremonial. To give way at this point seemed like breaking with the ancient faith, and we do not wonder that in Jerusalem the Christians were stoutly opposed to any such compromise with heathendom. At the same time those in the new sect who knew the world and perceived the opportunity that was offered of bringing the nations to the practical adoption of Israel's faith, saw that concessions must be made.

Thus there came about very early a sharp division in the Christian community which it is necessary to take into account if we would understand the development of the New Testament writings. Two parties were formed, the strength of one lying chiefly in Judea, and the other composed mainly of Jews living in other parts of the world. The question was, should this step be taken by which the Jew, for the sake of winning the world to the essential principles of his cherished faith, would cease to

* See p. 132.

† In fact he enjoins observance, See Matt, viii. 4; Luke v. 14; John vii. 8,

insist on a rite which from immemorial times had distinguished him from other men ?

We are not surprised, therefore, that the first Christian books to be written of which we have any knowledge sprung out of this controversy. The broad-church party, the party of progress, found a distinguished leader in the person of Paul, who went the whole length of concession to the outside world in matters of ceremony. This man was of such stuff that the more he was opposed by the Jerusalem Christians, the more resolute he grew. Satisfied that this was the course for the Jews to pursue in the providential order of their development, he boldly proclaimed the end of the old exclusiveness, the breaking down of "partition walls," and the opening of the spiritual kingdom to all kindreds, tongues and nations. When this clear announcement was made we must remember Christians were still almost altogether Jews. The epistles of Paul to the Romans, to the Corinthians and to the Galatians are evidently written to Jewish people dwelling in these different countries. His references to the Law and to the heroes of Israelitish history would not have been intelligible to other people. One has but to look over the epistle to the Romans, which Renan thinks is a general epistle to all the Pauline churches, to see that the people to whom he addressed himself were mainly Jews. He constantly presupposes in his readers an acquaintance with the Old Testament which the Romans certainly did not have. Christianity even yet was only a reformed Judaism. Out of Palestine, where Paul had made his in-

fluence felt, it extended fellowship to the Gentile convert without humiliating conditions; but in Palestine the original idea was adhered to of converting the world to the observance of the Law as Jesus had observed it. A Christian hierarchy was established at Jerusalem at the head of which stood Peter and James, the brother of Jesus, and to which the twelve apostles, or of such of them as were yet living, all belonged. From its *personnel* and its location this body was the authority of the church; and to stand out against its dictum was a very bold thing for Paul to do. He could preach his liberalism unmolested in the cities of Greece and Asia-Minor, but to do it in Jerusalem might be all his life was worth. There Christian and Jew alike would be outraged by his disregard of the ceremonial law. For thirty years Paul stood in this trying position, representing the advanced sentiment of the brotherhood of all men without respect of nationality, and urging upon his fellows that the time had now come to bring into a new and spiritual Israel the lovers of righteousness the world over.

In the first generation of Christians Paul is the man of action and of progress. Since the original apostles are bound to the old forms, he makes himself an apostle,* as distinguished from them, an apostle to the Gentiles. This assumption of apostolic functions intensified the enmity with which he was regarded at Jerusalem. It was held unpardonable that a man who had never seen Jesus, and

* "Paul an apostle—not of men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father."—Gal i. 1.

who appeared to know very little indeed about Jesus should assume to speak with authority in the church. The division over a question of policy concerning foreign converts became further embittered by personal enmities, the Judean party under the lead of Peter and James seeking to crush out Paul as a wolf in sheep's clothing, an evil one who while men slept had sown tares in the wheat-field.* But Paul was not a man to be crushed by any such means as these conservative brethren could bring against him. Though in vocal speech not a match for some of them, he was better educated, and in writing excelled them all. Knowing well where his strength lay, he wrote long letters to the churches, in which he discussed the questions at issue, and defended himself from the assaults of his opponents. Thus it was to a rupture in the church that the production of the first of the Christian Scriptures was due. Like so much that has followed them they were controversial writings.

At the same time this contention, at least as far as Paul was concerned, had to be in a measure smothered. It would not do for him distinctly and by name to denounce the elder apostles. They were the recognised heads of the Church, and an open breach with them would have been fatal to his scheme of universal faith. He stood alone against the Twelve, and at the disadvantage of not having been regularly raised to the Apostolate, the cham-

* The reference in Matthew vii. 15-20 to "false prophets who appear in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves," seems to have been put into the mouth of Jesus to bear upon Paul, as does also the parable of the tares.—Matthew xiii. 24-30.

pion of a daring innovation, and however he was troubled by his conservative brethren, he must keep his indignation somewhat under cover. Though he does not much mince matters, we cannot but feel as we read that he is curbing his wrath and does not say a tenth part of what he might say.

From the attitude of the Christians in Judea, many of whom had been converted by the preaching of Jesus, and from the attitude of the apostles who had received his explicit instructions, it is very evident that he did not contemplate any such departure from Jewish customs as Paul proposed. It is but fair to suppose that in this matter his most trusted disciples understood and followed his directions. If he directed them to preach the gospel outside of Jewish circles, it was no doubt with the understanding that their converts should obey the Jewish ritual. The fact that this was the view of all, so far as we know, who had been among the immediate followers of Jesus,* leaves no room for any other conclusion. And this is as we would naturally suppose it would be. The advance from Judaism to Christianity was not the work of one man or of one generation. We have seen how it was going on for two hundred years before Christ. The teaching of Jesus was only one step,—a very considerable step, and taken at a juncture which made it the marked point in this movement of thought—but the work was by no means completed by him. If, as appears probable, he

* This is on the supposition, to be substantiated further on, that Peter did not make the speeches attributed to him in *The Acts*.

counted upon the conversion of mankind not only to Jewish ideas but to Jewish customs, he counted upon what was soon seen to be an impossibility. To make even his presentation of Israel's religion feasible for publication to mankind, it must be further modified by cutting it entirely clear of the old ceremonial.

Let us bear in mind that we are still dealing with Christianity in its incipient condition, whilst it was yet wholly in the hands of the Jews. Jesus had preached a reform in which there had been great emphasis of inward purity and holiness, with a very light estimate of the outward forms of piety. Still he did, in an unostentatious fashion, observe these forms, and directed his disciples to do so. There was little therefore about his preaching which need make it more objectionable to a Jew than the preaching of Jeremiah. Very many did accept his words and remained Jews as before. In fact Christianity, till Paul's preaching, was simply and solely a Jewish sect. To make it more than that and not break with its Jewish members was the next great problem. But for Paul this problem might not have been met at all, and Christianity might have been restricted to this day within the limits of Judaism. As it was the proposal to deliver this religion from its Jewish trammels drove the Church into perilous straits, and in the tempest of controversy which ensued the craft was well nigh split in twain. The final result was a triumph for Paul and a vindication of his wisdom, but a footing was secured for the Church in the Gentile world at the cost of the almost complete alienation of the

Jews in Palestine. The entire destruction of the Jewish state in the year 70 made this attitude of the Palestinian Jews of less consequence to the prospects of Christianity than it otherwise might have been.

Of the epistles remaining which are attributed to Paul only four—*Romans*, the two *Corinthians* and *Galatians*—are undoubtedly his. But these are considerable documents, and, as we shall see, are almost the only portions of the New Testament of which we can name the writer with any certainty. We know from his own statement that Paul did write another epistle to the Corinthians before that which we call his First Epistle.* But that has been lost, notwithstanding the claim so loudly and so flippantly made that the works of the Bible-writers have been preserved by special providence. Probably many other of his letters have been lost. Of the ten remaining epistles attributed to him, he may possibly have written some, but they are mostly reckoned of very doubtful authenticity by the ablest critics. The four unquestionably genuine epistles afford the surest groundwork for the study of the New Testament, and no conjectures as to affairs in apostolic times can stand for a moment against the plain indications of these epistles. There are apologists who, following the book of The Acts, would have us think that the Apostles got on together in the most perfect harmony; that if Paul did withstand Peter to his face on one occasion, they quickly came to agreement, and were ever afterwards the most loving of brothers. But Paul's epistles do not allow us

* See 1 Cor. v. 9.

to come to any such mealy-mouthed conclusions. On the contrary they compel us to believe that there was intense hostility between the writer and the Jerusalem apostles, from the time he began to release his Gentile converts from submission to the Jewish ritual. This division is clearly shown in the epistle to the Galatians. Paul had founded the Galatian church in the year 52, had visited it again in 55, and now after two or three years he writes this letter. In the meantime emissaries from the Jerusalem church have been among the Galatians, sowing dissensions and alienating their affection from Paul: insisting that the Gentile converts must be circumcised. To this Paul says: "I marvel that ye are so soon turning from him that called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel; which is not another; only there are certain persons who are troubling you, and seeking to change entirely the gospel of Christ." Here the indignation of the writer becomes uncontrollable, and, that he may reach up to these apostolic meddlers without naming them, he says: "If an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed!" And not content with saying this rather rough thing once, he says it over again. He stoutly rebels at the authority of the apostles—"false brethren," he call them—to whom he will not be in subjection, "no, not for an hour." He refers to the apostles again as "those who were of reputation," "who seemed to be somewhat—whatsoever they were it makes no difference to me;" and proceeds to defend his doctrine of liberty from the bondage of the Jewish

ritual. But he cannot refrain from returning again and again to pour his irony and his imprecations upon the "apostles of the circumcision." People who can see in all this indications of fraternal feeling among the first Christian leaders must have a strange idea of brotherly love.

At the writing of *Galatians* the strife was over the question whether Gentiles must be circumcised as a condition of admission into the Christian church. At the writing of *Corinthians* the discussion had advanced to another stage. The question then was, should the Gentile converts be allowed to eat meat that had been offered to idols and afterwards offered for sale in the markets? A very trivial question, we should say, and so Paul also regarded it; but the party of Peter and James thought it of sufficient importance to stir a fierce contention, threatening the existence of the Greek churches. The tendency of the ritualists to be forever "tithing mint" to the neglect of the weightier matters was strikingly illustrated in this outcry against certain meats. For at that very time, as we see by Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the churches there were in a shockingly low moral condition. The great burden of the letter is complaint at this state of things, report of which had come to his ears. But in the midst of all this moral degradation the Judaizing party, overlooking the churches from their seat in Jerusalem, could bring in a purely formal question about meat! And we can see that it was made a delicate question, for Paul argues it at length, hedging here and there lest he give offence. On other matters he is bolder even where he is

less sagacious. True to his own practice he discourages marriage. Time is too short. The world is coming to an end speedily, and a family would only embarrass a man on that occasion. He dispenses much sound advice, has a curious chapter on "speaking with tongues" which he ranks the lowest of all "gifts,"* and finally sets forth his doctrine of the resurrection.

Second Corinthians gives us much more insight into matters concerning Paul personally, and reveals yet more strongly than his previous writings the conflict between him and the Jerusalem apostles. They had, it appears, represented him as no apostle, as an upstart, preaching himself and not Christ. Very vigorously he asserts his claims to be reckoned an authority in the church. He does not wish to be considered an apostle if he is to be classed with the others who are called apostles. "For we do not venture to reckon ourselves with some who commend themselves," who think because they are such strict Jews they are better than other folks. These Pharisaic Christians of Jerusalem had considered it a condescension to have anything to do with the church at Corinth. Paul

* As the exercise of these "gifts" involves the whole claim of Paul's testimony to supernaturalism as an actual witness, there is great temptation to spread out here the exact nature of this testimony. Want of space, however, and the purpose not to go beyond a merely popular presentation of my subject, prevent this. For an elaborate investigation of this matter I refer to *Supernatural Religion*, Vol. III. Suffice it to say here that the word rendered "miracles" in these epistles should be rendered "powers," as it elsewhere is, and was used by Paul to denote spiritual, not physical operations. As to the "speaking with tongues," that was evidently enough only an ecstatic utterance of gibberish to which religious enthusiasts have not infrequently shown a tendency.

contrasts himself with them: "We do not stretch ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not to you; not boasting in other men's labors; not boasting in another line of things made ready in our hand."* At the same time he contends that in no respect is he behind those too-apostolic† apostles, as he derisively calls them. They have cruelly wronged him and he feels it, but he will not let his indignation run away with his discretion, for that would be to fall into the snare which these "ministers of Satan" have set for him. "I forgive," he says, "in order that Satan"—and the reference is only too plain—"may not gain an advantage over us; *for we are not ignorant of his devices.*"‡ Such forgiveness is the severest kind of denunciation. In fact the wounds he has received are so deep that they will not heal. These "false apostles," Peter and James, these "deceitful workmen, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ,"§ what have they done to him? They have sent their emissaries into his own churches and sought to destroy his influence; have brought in another doctrine, annulling the liberty of the gospel. These emissaries have made themselves a bill of expense to people for whom Paul had labored gratuitously; and he is indignant that any of his old parishioners should have turned from him to these "ministers of Satan." He says, reproachfully: "Ye bear with it if one brings you

* 2 Cor. x. 12, seq.

† "Very chiefest" in the common version. "Overmuch apostles" is the rendering of the learned author of *Supernatural Religion*.

‡ 2 Cor. ii. 11.

§ 2 Cor. xi. 13.

into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one smites you in the face,"* and submits that it is time for them to bear with him while he sets forth his claims to have done more for Christ than all his opponents put together. The great boast of Paul's opponents was that they were Jews. He retorts: "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's offspring? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I am more."† And then he recounts his long list of sufferings for the gospel. This self-assertion is not in the best of taste, we must admit, and the writer is himself ashamed of it, but he seems to have had no other way to defend himself.

Of course there are other features of these epistles which for purposes of edification it would be more profitable to dwell upon; but my present purpose is to find out something about the origin and purpose of the New Testament writings, and this very contention between the apostles, as Baur has shown, is the key which unlocks the chief mysteries.

The *Epistle to the Romans*, though placed first, was the last to be written of the epistles which we can with certainty attribute to Paul. He has triumphed over his opponents in regard to the specific differences indicated in *Galatians* and *Corinthians*. Circumcision and the eating of meats derived from pagan sacrifices are no longer the issues. The question now has narrowed itself down simply to this: Is a Jew any better off for being a Jew?

* 2 Cor. xi. 20.

† 2 Cor. xi. 22, 23.

The point in dispute is changed, but Paul is contending with the same old antagonists. The fury of his previous onsets is spent, and indeed the issue is reduced from a practical to a theoretical matter, and does not so directly imperil the existence of the church. It required no great foresight to see that however such a question was decided at that time, the Jews could not long retain any pre-eminence in the church, and so the apostle's fire burns low in this discussion. Indeed his handling of this subject drops down into dry and dreary Rabbinism, in which premise and conclusion are alike uninteresting to the modern reader. The last chapters, however, commencing with the famous twelfth, raise the intrinsic value of the epistle to the first order.

Of the other ten epistles some may be his, others pretty certainly are not his. *Hebrews* has always been suspected and is now pretty generally given up. The three pastorals to Timothy and Titus are under almost as strong an impeachment. The other six may or may not be genuine. In either case they add little to our knowledge of Paul and his relations to the other apostles. The books falsely ascribed to him are still of a high order, and not less valuable for religious instruction because written by some other hand. We shall find in the New Testament, as we found in the Old, a great deal of excellent writing under an assumed and already famous name.

Paul's epistles were the first written books of the New Testament, and they are therefore the first to which it needs to pass in tracing the gradual development of cer-

tain lines of thought. His doctrinal basis differs from that of the preceding apocryphal books chiefly in the assumption that the advent of the Messiah has already taken place. But beyond the bare facts that Christ came, was crucified and rose again, Paul indicates very little knowledge of him. He makes extensive use of the name of Christ, but in his usage the name scarcely suggests a person. It is a vague term having only an ideal sense, as pure an abstraction as is "the Son of Man" in *Daniel* or *Enoch*. The real Jesus, the man of flesh and blood, does not figure in these epistles at all. No reference is made to anything that Jesus ever did or said, except in one instance;* which is certainly remarkable, however we explain it. Unquestionably he could have made effective use of some of the acts and utterances of Jesus in carrying out the scheme of a universal religion. Of special use to him would have been the ethical precepts with which the Master's discourses were so richly furnished. And yet, for all that Paul says to the contrary, we might infer that he never heard of these things. But that could hardly be. What then does he mean by his silence touching the real life of the Master? We are forced to conclude that the personal Messiah was a matter of little consequence to him as he looked back; just as to the writer of the book of *Enoch* a personal Messiah in anticipation had been quite an unimportant feature in the tremendous scenery about to be unrolled. The Christ he had in his own mind, a purely ideal creation, was everything to

* 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

Paul ; the actual man who grew up from the cradle, toiled for his daily bread, became a reforming Rabbi, journeyed wearily over the hills and by the lakes of Galilee telling men how they ought to feel and act toward one another, —this actual man had no part in his religious system. The Jews abroad who were without personal knowledge of Jesus got no knowledge of him from these letters of Paul. They might imagine a being who had come and gone, answering to their expectations ; but this was of secondary importance. The Messianic condition of the world was the great thing overshadowing all other hopes, the reign of righteousness, in which the spiritual classes had come to see the true Messiah.* Jesus, therefore, under Paul's teaching passed rapidly into a metaphysical entity which was the first step towards his deification. In the next generation he is called a god ; then God ; then Very God.

Another feature which served to connect these earliest Christian writings with the preceding Jewish literature was the pronounced expectation that the end of the world

* There is some difficulty in making ordinary Christians see that Paul knew only a spiritual Jesus, for the simple reason that they spiritualize him themselves. About the only things that people commonly think of Jesus having done in the world are these three, in each of which he is only the passive subject : He was born of a virgin, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was raised from the dead. For the rest (and for two of these three points, as many will say,) he is a being built up of pious imaginings, as unrelated to this actual world as "Gabriel" or any of the heavenly host. But really if Paul in strictness means a *person* when he says "Christ," what significance can be attached to the constantly recurring phrases, "to be in Christ," "Christ in us," etc. ? That there is a beautiful sense in these expressions I am aware, but it is only to be reached by advancing beyond the human and realistic ideas of Jesus.

was at hand. The apocalyptic books had associated the coming of the "Son of Man" with the final collapse of the material universe, and with this theory Paul is in full accord, with this simple difference, that the "great and terrible day" is to be the *second* appearance of Christ. That day is at hand,—just as was stated in the book of Enoch,—would come within the life-time of some to whom he wrote. His doctrine of the resurrection and the general judgment corresponds also with the theories current in the Jewish literature of the time. In short, he was a Jew, as he himself says, nurtured in the ancient faith, his mind strongly drawn to the later works of his countrymen. He knew no Christian books. He was the first maker of a Christian book. But he had studied the Jewish authors from the oldest of the prophets to the newest of the apocrypha. He shows an especial familiarity with Jesus ben Sirach* and uses his words ten times where he quotes Jesus of Nazareth once. And his reading was not confined to Jewish books. If we may credit the writer of *The Acts*, he could aptly quote the Greek poets in preaching to Athenians. He was a measurably cultured as well as a vigorous man. Never were letters more natural and human than his. What should ever have led anybody to suppose them supernatural is a question that finds no answer in an examination of the writings themselves. There is nothing in them but that a man may well have said, except that it be here and there an excess of

* Comp. Rom. ii. 5, J. S. xxv. 18, 19; Rom. ix. 21, J. S. xxxiii. 13; 1. Cor. x. 25, J. S. xxxi. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 14, J. S. xiii. 1; Gal. vi. 7, J. S. xvi. 12.

rancor or of self-assurance. But these are human, certainly you could not call them divine. A satisfactory feature about Paul's epistles, and one of the marks of their genuineness, is, that he does not, in giving us accounts of his own experiences, interlard them with stories of miracle. In the book of Acts, which is mostly a fabrication, Paul works miracles like any wizard ; * but in the epistles there is no breach of the order of nature. He struggles with the necessities and pains of existence, just as we all must, and depends upon argument to convince his hearers, never once calling in a stroke of magic. And this illustrates again the fact to which I have repeatedly called attention, that where a truthful man, in the Bible as elsewhere, relates what has gone on under his own observation, nothing supernatural occurs. Not that Paul disbelieves in miracles—and this makes the case still stronger,—he believes in them thoroughly; makes much, for instance, of the resurrection of Jesus ; but the honest soul never pretends to have witnessed a miracle.† If our

* Acts xiii. 2 ; xiv. 10, 20 ; xvi. 18, 26 ; xviii. 9 ; xix. 11, 12 ; xx. 10 ; xxiii. 11 ; xxvii. 23 ; xxviii. 5, 8, 9.

† That is to say, anything which we should call a miracle. No doubt he regarded the "speaking with tongues" and the visions he had of Jesus and the "third heaven" miraculous. A critic of this lecture has cited the claim to have seen the risen Christ (1 Cor. xv. 8) in answer to the above statement. It may be sufficient to say, in all deference to orthodox opinion, that when we are meeting every day people, perfectly honest, as far as we can judge, who declare that they have seen and are seeing all the while "risen spirits," it is idle to pretend that anything supernatural is involved in such an experience. Paul believed his vision as objective and real, as the people just referred to believe theirs to be. If we allow his claim we must allow theirs, as the two are precisely similar, and explain both by what is called the "spiritual philosophy." But it is open to us to say that these visions are all subjective appearances, having no existence except in the mind of the "seer." In either case there is no miracle.

investigation shall show that in the New Testament, as in the Old, supernatural occurrences are only narrated from hearsay, a great stumbling-block in the way of Bible readers will be removed, and they will be helped to a better understanding and appreciation of the book.

SEVENTH LECTURE.

OTHER BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WE have seen something of the contention between Paul and the elder apostles from Paul's point of view. It would be of exceeding interest if we could turn to undoubted writings of Peter, or James, or John, and see how the matter looked from their side. Unfortunately, however, we have no work of any one of these apostles so well attested as are the four leading epistles of Paul. The only work we have which professes to give an account of the opening of the gospel to the Gentile world untrammelled by the Jewish ceremonial, is the *Acts of the Apostles*, an anonymous work of uncertain date, which for various reasons cannot be taken as a trustworthy record. One of these reasons, and one which under the circumstances might be reckoned conclusive, is that the unknown author absolutely contradicts the plain statements of the Apostle Paul. Paul tells us that the admission of Gentiles into the Church without circumcision was strenuously opposed by the other apostles; this unknown author represents on the contrary that they were the first to propose this liberal innovation. Paul specifies among his opponents particularly Peter and James, and recounts an unpleasantness which was deve-

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loped at Antioch where Peter had really been induced to so far lay aside his Judaism as to eat with Gentiles; but when "certain persons came from James" with other advice, he went back into the most inveterate exclusiveness, carrying with him the other Christian Jews of the place, so that Paul thought it necessary to upbraid him "before them all" in the words: "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live like the Jews?"* The unknown author of The Acts has it that long before, Peter had had a revelation from on high making it clear that Gentiles were as good as Jews, and that no race of God's creatures are to be called unclean;† and he is made to declare this doctrine openly in words perfectly suited to the mouth of Paul, but which, after reading the epistle to the Galatians, we find it impossible to think could have come from any of the elder apostles: "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him.'"‡ Everything is reversed and Peter is made the Apostle to the Gentiles, preaching to them with great effect at Cæsarea while yet Paul is laboring among the Jews. It is Peter and not Paul who first has the contention with the party of the circumcision and goes up to Jerusalem to explain matters, but with so much happier result that, after talking perhaps three minutes, he satisfies James and the rest, who with one accord graciously say; "Then

* Gal. ii.

† Chap. x. 9-16.

‡ Acts x. 34, 35.

hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”* All this time Paul shows no disposition to preach to the Gentiles and does not go about this work till he is sent by the others.† Now all this sounds very strange after reading Paul’s account of himself, given incidentally and with every mark of truth, in his epistles. But we are not yet at the end of these strange contradictions, nor shall we be able to go to the end of them. Passing over much else we come to the report of Paul’s visit to Jerusalem to consult about his work among the Gentiles. The necessity of this consultation arose from the fact that the Greek churches were continually molested by Christians from Judea who insisted that the converts were bound to observe the Jewish ceremonial. Paul’s account of the meeting represents it, to say the least, as decidedly inharmonious. He gives us to understand that he stood alone in defence of his doctrine that the Gentile Christian owed no service to the Jewish ritual, and shows plainly that he only came off with a reluctant admission from Peter, James and John, “who seemed to be pillars” that he “should go to the heathen” and they to the Jews. Peter he especially designates as being by common consent the Apostle of the Circumcision;‡ the one next to James most bitterly opposed to any concession to the

* xi. 18.

† xiii. 3.

‡ This expression is used without offensive implications, as Paul elsewhere speaks of Christ as a “minister of the Circumcision,” showing that he was not blind to the fact that the other apostles had the example of the Master on their side. He did not look for authority to the man Jesus, but to the risen and glorified Christ from whom he believed he had a “revelation.”

Gentiles.* When now we turn to the unknown narrator of the event† we find that the "certain men" who had been troubling Paul were not, as he represents, emissaries from the Jerusalem church, but irresponsible persons who had no countenance from the apostles. Instead of finding the pillars of the church, as he indicates, strongly set against his movement, and refusing to have anything to do with it, only "certain of the sect of Pharisees" offered objection, and Peter rose up and assumed the whole responsibility, declaring that "God made choice among us that the Gentiles by *my* mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe." Not only does Peter, who had given Paul such trouble at Antioch, claim to be himself the Apostle to the Gentiles, even James, who had sent his tools there to instigate that trouble, even James, the most bigoted Jew of them all, is made to give a hearty assent to the plan of releasing the Gentile Christians from observance of the Jewish ritual!

Thus it becomes apparent on the slightest candid examination of the case that if Paul tells the truth this unknown writer does not tell the truth. From what we know of Paul we unhesitatingly accept his statement as against the writer's, of whom we know nothing, not even his name. Tradition has it that the book was written by Luke, who also wrote the Third Gospel. But there is not the slightest evidence that this was the writer's name; even if that could be shown we should know no more of him. The object of the book, however, is suffi-

* See Gal, ii,

† Acts xv,

ciently clear. The writer has Pauline views for which he proposes to sacrifice Paul. The date of the writing, though not to be exactly fixed, was subsequent to the death of the great Apostle. Paul's idea of Christianity has triumphed, the issue which had so disturbed the Church in the first century was past, and it was desirable now to do something to save the reputation of the elder apostles and at the same time preserve to the Church a direct connection through them with its Founder. Accordingly some one who had more regard for the fame of the original apostles than he had for truth, wrote this book, in which no one of the characters is recognisable as we know him elsewhere. Paul figures while in the presence of the Twelve as a mere milk-sop, showing none of that kingly will which "would not be in subjection, no, not for an hour." Peter is ten times more like Paul than he is like himself, and James has lost all his Jewish exclusiveness.

Among other reasons for not accepting this book as authentic history I have space to mention only one. In any book of profane history the profuse introduction of stories of miracle is held to invalidate its claim to be a truthful record. There is no reason why this should not apply to the sacred writings. Believers in miracles cannot pretend that power to work these wonders was exclusively in the hands of the sacred writers or of their nation. The Egyptians could play at the same game with Moses in turning rods into snakes, and the Jews always conceded that the working of miracles was a gift which the heathen possessed to some extent in common

with themselves. A miraculous story, therefore, in the most favorable view, is entitled to only the same consideration in a Jewish book that it has in a Greek or a Persian book. In one place as in the other, it is antecedently incredible ; and though in view of the prevailing belief of the ancients in the possibility of miracles occasional statements of such alleged occurrences, made, as Herodotus for instance makes them, with diffidence, may not discredit a writer's general work, if he enters extensively and positively into such statements, as do the writers of the apocryphal gospels and the Lives of the Saints, he forfeits all title to our confidence as a narrator. Now there is no book of the New Testament where such free use is made of the supernatural as in the Acts of the Apostles. This strange work begins with the appearance of the risen Christ on Mount Olivet, where he issues commands to the disciples and whence he ascends to heaven in a cloud.* Angels then appear and talk with them.† Next they have a great meeting where the apostles and others talk in all manner of languages‡ which they have never learned. Many other signs and wonders are said to follow. Afterward Peter with a word sets a man on his legs who had been a helpless cripple from his birth.§ Peter rebukes a man and his wife for some fault, whereat they both fall down dead.|| Miracles come on too thick to be recorded and it is roughly said, "many signs and wonders were wrought

* i. 1-8.

† i. 9,

‡ ii. 1-13.

§ iii. 6.

|| v. 1-11,

among the people.”* The apostles are put in prison, but it is of no use, for an angel opens the door and lets them out.† An angel sends Philip to baptize a eunuch.‡ Saul meets with a whole bevy of supernatural appearances on the road to Damascus.§ A disciple named Ananias holds a conversation with the Lord whose spoken words are given.|| Peter, who is the head figure in this work, comes forward again, and heals a man of palsy by a word of his mouth.¶ Not content with recording this stretch of power, the writer gives a detailed statement of Peter’s raising a good woman to life after she had been some time dead and was prepared for burial.** Peter and Cornelius have a joint experience with angels and visions.†† Again when Peter is cast into prison an angel considerably lets him out.‡‡ An angel smites Herod on his throne and kills him. §§ Paul by a word smites a sorcerer with blindness. ||| In order that Paul may not appear too much behind Peter he is made to heal a cripple ¶¶ and to cast a demon out of a damsel.*** For Paul, too, when thrown into prison, the doors are miraculously opened.††† He is also credited with working many “special miracles,” and the strangely apocryphal statement is made that handkerchiefs and aprons sent from him wrought wonderfully in the cure of diseases and the casting out of devils.‡‡‡ Disclosing again his desire that Paul shall be even with Peter, the writer tells the story of a young man who went to sleep while the apostle was

* v. 12.	† v. 19.	‡ vii. 26.	§ ix. 1-9.	ix. 10-16.
¶ ix. 31.	** ix. 46-42.	†† x. 1-16.	‡‡ xii. 7.	§§ xii. 20.
xiii. 11.	¶¶ xiv. 7.	*** xvi. 16.	††† xxi. 25.	‡‡‡ xix. 12.

preaching and fell headlong out of an upper window, bruising himself to death; whereupon Paul raises him to life.* And so the narrative goes on to the end. The mere fact that the book contains such an astounding series of miraculous incidents is enough to set it outside the domain of actual history. Even those who do not find stories of miracle incredible must, we should suppose, find it impossible to think that Paul had a hand in such tremendous marvels, since he nowhere gives us in his own writings the slightest intimation of these things. Moreover it is perfectly evident, even on a cursory examination, that this book was written to *make* history, not to record it. It has been called a theological romance, and certainly as such it has had a very great success; a success in fact entirely disproportionate to its merits. Though the writer had some skill, he had small resources. Only a few characters figure conspicuously, but even these have no characteristics. They all make the same speech, beginning: "Men and brethren," or "Ye men of Athens." Even an angel who is brought on the stage for a little speech, sets out with the same formula: "Ye men of Galilee." The writer thinks it not enough to make Peter out the Apostle of the Gentiles, he must give Paul a strong Jewish coloring, representing him as con-sorting after his conversion only with Jewish Christians and "straightway" preaching to the Jews at Damascus.† After awhile the unconverted become incensed against him and would have taken his life but that his friends

* xx. 10.

† Acts ix. 19, 20.

let him down over the walls by night in a basket, whereupon he escaped to Jerusalem. Paul, on the contrary, distinctly says that when it pleased God to reveal to him the truth of the gospel—he tells no story of a miraculous conversion—"immediately" he conferred not with flesh and blood but went down into Arabia. When afterward he returned to Damascus he says nothing of having preached to the Jews there, but says distinctly that he was ordained from on high to preach Christ to the heathen, and "was unknown by face to the churches in Judea."* Could he have passed over the persecution of Damascus and the basket episode, and given us such a different notion of his going to Jerusalem if these things had been real? He simply says that after spending three years in Arabia and Damascus, presumably in retirement and reflection, he went up to see the leading Apostles.

The author of The Acts sets himself to the task of abolishing the differences between Paul and Peter, and he does it in every sense of the word. He makes them the best of friends and as like as two peas. Whatever feat Peter performs, Paul goes through the same. Such a mechanical panorama of events poorly comports with the infinite variety of actual life, and betrays not only the romancer, but the poverty of his invention. I say unhesitatingly, with Paul's faithful record before us, we must set aside the book of Acts as an attempt to rob him of his glory for the sake of securing to Gentile Christianity, through an utterly false representation, the authority of

* Gal. i. 15, seq.

the elder apostles and especially the paternity of Peter.

I have said that it would be very gratifying if we had an undoubted writing of one of the three "pillar" apostles with whom Paul had his contention. To be sure we have several epistles bearing their names, but there are strong reasons for thinking that not one of them is genuine. The *Epistle of James*, though judaistic,* is not sufficiently so to have come from that apostle. The most that can be said is that it was by some one who leaned toward James. It can only be taken therefore as partially reflecting the judgment of James in its references to the doctrines of Paul. It attacks somewhat vehemently the theory of "salvation by faith" and extols "works," so that taking those words in their modern sense it sounds well. But it soon becomes apparent to the careful reader that by "works," the writer means observance of the Jewish ceremonial among other things. The flaw that he sees in salvation by faith is that fidelity to the old ritual is left out. However this is by no means what Luther called it, "an epistle of straw." The writer, whoever he was, had a strong gift of common-sense and shows familiarity with the late as the early Jewish literature. He sets himself distinctly in antagonism with the Apostle to the Gentiles, against whom he exclaims: "O, vain man, wilt thou know that faith without works is dead?" and clearly indicates that he has read with decided disapproval the epistle to the Romans. Like Paul he knows Jesus ben Sirach thoroughly and makes free use of his

* It is addressed only to "the twelve tribes."

words.* The book was written most likely shortly before the siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

Next in the New Testament order comes the *First Epistle of Peter*, of which we can very positively say it never was written by any other Peter than that imaginary one of whom we read in the Acts; the Peter who is drawn after Paul. It may not unlikely be a better epistle than the real Peter would have written, though we should heartily welcome a word from him to see what he had to say for his conduct at Antioch and for his doctrine of a Christian Judaism. That the elder apostles had something vigorous to say for that doctrine, which we should be sure to get in any genuine writing of theirs, may, I think, be considered certain. But there is nothing of it in this epistle, which may therefore be set down as written by some one who did not even reflect the opinions of that apostle. Its date is uncertain; probably it was written toward the close of the first or early in the second century.

The Second Epistle of Peter, is one of the few canonical books that have always been under a cloud. Many conservative critics freely admit that it could not have been written until the latter half of the second century—more than a hundred years after Peter was dead. A few of the indications which lead to this judgment may be briefly stated. No writer of an earlier date mentions the book or refers to it. When first mentioned† it is not as-

* Comp. Jam. i. 5, J. S. vi. 37; Jam. i. 19, J. S. v. 11; Jam. i. 27, J. S. iv. 10; Jam. iii. 5, J. S. xxviii. 11 ff.; Jam. iii. 9, J. S. v. 13; Jam. v. 16, J. S. xxxv. 16, 17.

† By Clement Alexandrinus.

cribed to Peter. According to Jerome it was generally regarded unauthentic as late as the end of the fourth century. Moreover the book betrays itself. It copies Jude, who wrote after Peter's death. It makes Peter call Paul "our beloved brother," which for those primitive times would have been an extraordinary stretch of suavity after *Galatians* and *Second Corinthians*. But that he should have called these very epistles, or any other writings of Paul, "Scriptures," as he is there made to do, is of course impossible. No Christian writings were reckoned Scriptures at that early day. The writer also shows that in his time it had become a grave question why the second coming of Christ was delayed,* which is positive proof that he wrote long after the apostolic age.

Three brief writings are called the *First*, *Second* and *Third Epistles of John*. These, however, make no pretence of being the work of an apostle. The last two actually exclude such a supposition by the statement that they are from an "elder" or presbyter. Many critics find indications that these epistles and the Fourth Gospel are by the same hand; and as that work is now believed to date from the second century, they have cast about among the presbyters of that time to find, if possible, one who from what is known of him might have produced these writings. As a result Renan and others have fixed upon a notable man known as the Presbyter John whom they regard as the probable author of the Gospel and the three Epistles. If they are right there is no mis-

* Chap. iii. 4.

application of the name of *John*, but only a misapprehension as to what John; the Church tendency being, of course, to carry the credit back to the apostle.

Our desire, therefore, for an undoubted epistle of one of the three pillar apostles must go unsatisfied. Jude or Judas, whose name is attached to a very brief epistle, is not easily identified. It appears from verse 17 that he was not an apostle. He calls himself "the brother of James." If, as seems likely, the James he means was the Bishop of Jerusalem, then Jude must have been also a brother of Jesus. The authenticity of the writing has been much questioned, partly because there is so little of it, while there is so much that a brother of Jesus might have told us; partly because the writer quotes the book of Enoch as a veritable utterance of the antediluvian, that being thought an unhappy concession for an inspired writer to make to an apocryphal book. Neither of these points seem to me to count anything against the authenticity of the epistle; but I find much difficulty in supposing that a brother of Jesus would refer to him as the Lord Jesus Christ, and couple his name with that of the Lord God in the manner of this epistle. The intimacy of the family relation, especially the familiar intercourse of brothers, hardly permits the growth of this mystic conception. Indeed it is matter of record in the gospels that Jesus' brothers gave him only too little consideration while he lived. James, it is true, came to the front after the crucifixion, but then a position of influence opened to him, and to inducements of that sort he was evidently susceptible. Of

Jude we know almost nothing. The epistle which goes under his name, the substance of which may be his, is strongly Jewish, and was put forth to combat certain corruptions in doctrine and practice which had crept into the Church. The teaching of Paul is referred to as the "error of Balaam," and woes are pronounced upon those who accept it.

There remains for us to consider in this lecture the book of *Revelation*, or, as it is otherwise called, the Christian *Apocalypse*. There is in the judgment of able critics a strong probability that this book is, and it professes to be, the work of the Apostle John. One thing, however, is certain, whoever wrote it never wrote any other book of the New Testament. The style of the writer is unmistakable, and we find it nowhere else. If this is the apostle some other author must be found for the gospel and epistles that go under the name of John. The book is an attempt to produce, in the fashion of *Daniel* and *Enoch*, a prophecy which should, in strange and puzzling symbols, at once reveal and hide the facts concerning the speedy coming of Christ the second time, and the consequent end of the world. The writer's diction fitted him wonderfully for his task, and wherever we can understand him we find him a real "son of thunder." But for the most part he has so securely hidden away his thought that nobody has been able to find out what it is. The writing was done, as was the book of *Daniel*, in a time of intense political excitement. Judea was in full rebellion and Rome was gathering her legions about ill-fated Jeru-

salem. John from the isle of Patmos, looking out upon the gloomy prospect, poured forth in enigmatic but truly prophetic tone his weird vision of the future. Whatever it was that he supposed to be coming to pass under his figures of beasts and angels, trumpets and seals, this much is certain, *it was to come quickly*.* Through a series of terrific calamities Israel was to be brought off triumphant at last. The Lord himself would come and overwhelm the enemies of his nation and his Church in everlasting fire. For, we observe, this writer sticks to his Jewish exclusiveness. Only one hundred and forty-four thousand are "sealed" from the impending destruction, and these are all Jews, twelve thousand out of each tribe. The uncircumcised are in his thought unclean and detestable. In short this is a book which, whether by an apostle or not, fairly represents the spirit of that part of the primitive Church which was dominated by the Twelve. If it is the work of John, we have here one of the very books we so much desire to see as throwing some light upon the great controversy from the conservative or judaistic point of view. What has John, writing ten years after the publication of Paul's great epistles, to say of him and his revolutionary movement?

Preliminary to his visions he addresses a few words to each of the seven churches of Asia-Minor, writing as a Jew to Jews. Commencing with the Church of Ephesus, he makes a thrust at Paul in the very first sentence: "I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience, and

* xxii. 20.

how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and how thou hast tried them *who say they are apostles and are not and hast found them liars.*"* In what he has to say to another church we find him referring to Paul's views as the "doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, *to eat things sacrificed to idols.*"† Again he says: "I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan."‡ Thus it was even disputed that Paul was a Jew. We have seen how he felt called upon vehemently to assert the fact of his Jewish parentage,§ and we have it from Epiphanius that a sect of Jewish Christians, known as Ebionites, positively asserted that Paul was born a Gentile but became a proselyte to Judaism with a view to secure a daughter of the high-priest in marriage; that when the priest refused his consent to this arrangement, Paul at once sickened of Judaism and began his attacks upon circumcision, the Sabbath and the Law. Malicious stories like this could not have circulated about the great apostle but that there was a party in the Church which bore him a bitter enmity. Whether or not the writer of Revelation means Paul when he speaks again of "them of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but do lie,"|| he shows his own narrowness and bigotry and the immense importance he sets upon being a Jew. Such a man would of course have withstood every effort to carry the

* ii. 2.
§ p. 154.

† ii. 14. Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 4, 8; x. 25-27.
|| iii. 9,

‡ ii. 9,

gospel to the Gentiles. This corresponds precisely with the idea we get of John from Paul's references to him, and is therefore one of the capital indications of the authenticity of the book. It is quite in accordance with what we should expect from earnest men, engaged in a supremely important cause, that where radical differences arise deep feeling should be stirred. Nor does it happen in such cases that the feeling is only on one side. Nothing but the feebleness of your antagonist or the impotence of his case, keeps you from being aroused when he is aroused. If he, repressing his wrath as best he can, still breaks out in invective, some forceful utterance will spring to your lips if there is any strength of manhood about you. Paul refers to some "overmuch apostles," not by name, to be sure, but by unmistakable implication, as "false brethren," and to their messengers and representatives, if not to themselves, as "ministers of Satan." But in the use of rough words and deprecatory allusions the Revelator is not behind. We have observed his repeated reference to Paul's fellowship as the "synagogue of Satan." "Satan," indeed, became *the* word with which to point a jibe at this man "who claimed to be an apostle and was not." Occasionally he is Balaam, the heathen prophet. Once he is pointed at as "that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication and *to eat things sacrificed to idols.*"* Terrible vengeance is denounced upon

* ii. 20. The true rendering is "thy wife Jezebel," which addressed to a church is of course figurative. Fornication and its equivalents in this connection appear to be used figuratively, to indicate the uncleanness which a Jew takes from mixing with Gentiles on terms of equality.

all who follow this teacher. In this connection, and to make his allusion unmistakable, John recalls and parodies an expression of Paul. In one of his very finest passages the latter had spoken of the mysteries which had been disclosed to him. "God," he said, "hath revealed them to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God."* "The 'depths' of Satan," scornfully retorts John. "To you I say, as many as have not this doctrine (Paul's doctrine, before referred to, of eating meat that had been offered to idols), such as have not known *the 'depths' of Satan, as they speak*"—† to such he says he will be lenient.

So far I have only referred to the first chapters of this singular book, and that is as far perhaps as a prudent man would care to go into it. As soon as the writer gets through his addresses to the seven churches he plunges into such obscurities and hides his conceptions behind such extraordinary symbols that no sane person can pretend to make out what he does mean. No great confidence, therefore, can be placed on any supposed allusion to Paul in the body of this work. At the same time it would appear that he must be the person shadowed under the name of "the false prophet."‡ A spirit goes "out of the mouth of the false prophet," working wonders, attracting the attention of the whole world. Next we hear of the false prophet who wrought these wonders, he is taken

* 1 Cor. ii. 10.

† Rev. ii. 24. The allusion is obscured in the English version; in the Greek it is apparent.

‡ xvi. 13; xix. 20; xx. 10.

and "cast alive into a lake of fire and burning brimstone." The heathen nations are the children of Satan, the Jews are the children of God. Paul in going out to preach the gospel to the heathen, goes out, Satan-like, "to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth."* And to this iniquity the writer attributes the scenes which were transpiring as he wrote; the gathering of the Roman legions, who "went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about and the beloved city."† He consoles himself, however, with the reflection that Satan and his prophet are "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, there to be tormented day and night forever and ever."

The Apocalypse, as far as we can understand it at all, goes to corroborate the view drawn from Paul's epistles as to the situation between him and the other apostles. Reading this book we are more than ever convinced that he does not exaggerate the opposition he met with in seeking so to shape the gospel as that the world outside of Jewry might receive it. On the other hand the Apocalypse, considered as the work of John, brings an additional witness to invalidate the record of events which we have in The Acts. So narrow and bigoted a Jew as by his own showing he is, could never have given his consent to the admission of Gentiles into the Church without passing through the ante-room of Judaism. He is

*xx. 8.

†xx. 9. The writer, speaking prophetically, says that "fire came down from God, out of heaven," and devoured the assailants. The result of the siege, however, proved very different.

the very man to have said, "Except ye be circumcised after the prescription of Moses ye cannot be saved." Writing before the conciliators undertook their task of covering up the strife in the early Church, his book reflects, as far as such an anomalous work can be expected to reflect anything, the actual state of feeling in his party at the time.

Within a year or two from the writing of this book Jerusalem fell after a memorable siege, the horrors of which will never be effaced from human remembrance. *Revelation* itself is a vision, or series of visions, wrought out under the excitement of these appalling conditions. It is the expiring echo of Jewish prophecy—none the less Jewish for being also Christian. Scarcely had it circulated among the churches when the lurid light of the burning city lit up the southern sky, and in the agony of many thousand* sufferers Jerusalem was utterly blotted out.

The fall of the city was also the fall of the really apostolic Church which had its seat there. The final and irretrievable extinction of the Jewish state had the effect to give an immense impulse to Pauline Christianity. The Gentile Christians in Palestine who had given in their adhesion to the Mosaic ceremonial now turned away from it, and the Jewish party was reduced to a feeble minority. It withdrew to Peræa, where it gradually diminished and finally disappeared altogether.

* Josephus puts it over a million, but the city could never have held a tenth part of that number.

Such an ignoble ending of the work of the elder apostles had an unpleasant look, especially to those who heretofore had held to them. *It absolutely cut off the apostolic succession before the end of the first century.* Hence a series of writings with the set purpose of making it appear that Peter, James and John were heart and hand in favor of the promulgation of the gospel to the Gentiles, free from all entanglement with the Mosaic law.

These writings are the epistles bearing the name of Peter, and the book of Acts whose presentation of the animus of the elder apostles, being in accordance with what to the great body of the Church seemed becoming in men clothed with such exalted functions, was the more readily accepted, and, notwithstanding its glaring contradictions of the older books, became in a little while the established view. Peter was raised to the head of the Church which he had no part in building, and the reputation of Paul was correspondingly eclipsed from the memorials preserved in his epistles of his having dared to contend with Peter. Thus the mere accident of a man's being one of the original band of disciples overbalanced the adverse fact that he left no written or spoken word that can be said to be of the least value, and quite gave him the precedence over a really great man whose rightful praise it is to have saved Christianity from the Jewish grave in which the Twelve, honestly but blindly, did their best to bury it.

It may appear to some that I am dwelling too long on this first division in the Church; and it may well be

asked, What of all this? Let me say that it is not from any preference for angry words, or from any desire to disparage the apostolic Church, that I have so steadily directed your attention to the great birth-struggle out of Judaism. It is no gratification to me to know that the first Christians did *not* love one another. But this fact has been dwelt upon because of its bearing on larger matters. Two important conclusions flow from this discussion: First, the fame of Paul is rescued from the imputations of weakness and truckling under which he has suffered since the writing of the book of Acts. Secondly, the way is opened to an explanation of the miraculous in the New Testament on the irrefragable ground that it is not supported by the testimony of eye-witnesses. This miracle question is the rock of offence to the intelligent student of the Bible at the present time; and whatever helps at this point is of the highest value. An inquiry into the apostolic controversy has led us to see that the book which alone gives the account of miracles wrought by the apostles is not authentic history. These stories therefore at once fall into the character of legends, and give the reader no further trouble. The advantage gained from this consideration will not be lost as we proceed to the study of the gospels.

EIGHTH LECTURE.

THE GOSPELS.

THE chief embarrassment in writing these lectures has been the breadth of the subjects with which we have had to deal. A vast amount of study has been devoted to the Bible, and now any adequate presentation of the subject involves a review of critics and commentators as well as the book itself. This has been found out of the question in the course of a few lectures. Especially apparent is the impossibility of any such thing as we come to the Gospels which have been the subject of such minute and elaborate examination, and on which books have been written almost without number. I must therefore content myself with a few general statements, designed chiefly to correct common misapprehensions.

It is still thought by most readers that these four books were actually written by the men to whom they are ascribed, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Matthew and John being of the original twelve and therefore eyewitnesses of what they relate. The immense advantage to be derived from the testimony of persons who speak from their own knowledge has led apologists to make the strongest possible defence of this theory. Honest criticism, however, finds no sufficient ground for such a supposition. Indeed the want of evidence as to the authorship

of the gospels is about the most startling fact we meet with in the study of the Bible. For upon these records the Church of every name professes to stand, and we are utterly unable to show who made the records. None of these writings had been produced when Paul wrote, or he would have distinctly referred to them. If any beginnings had been made toward a record of the sayings and doings of Jesus, they must certainly have received his notice. We must therefore come down to the verge of the destruction of Jerusalem before the composition of anything in the shape of a gospel was attempted. There is evidence of the existence of something of the sort about that time which was attributed to Matthew, and which is supposed to have been the basis on which our Gospel "according to Matthew" was afterwards formed. But the whole subject is obscure to a painful degree, and very little can be said about it with any degree of positiveness. But if we are in the dark as to Matthew, much more so are we as to either of the other gospels. Who wrote them, or when they were written; whether the second preceded the third in time, or *vice versa*; whether one was made up from another, or independently, or from a preceding record which was then discarded and lost, are questions about which different theologians will lead you in all imaginable different ways. In fact there is not in all controversial literature such a medley of confused and discordant voices as are raised in the effort to set up securely some hypothesis about the formation, date and authorship of the gospels. One must con-

sider with amazement the vast superstructure of theology built on these uncertain foundations that hardly afford a point of security on which to hang even a negative criticism.

This however we can say. It cannot be shown that any of the gospels as we have them existed before the beginning of the second century. But there is good reason to suppose that at least the First and Second Gospels were not originally written in their present shape. What the previous writings were from which these were made is almost wholly a matter of conjecture, our actual knowledge of them being limited to a few more or less doubtful quotations found in the Christian Fathers. It is more feasible to fix upon portions of our gospels which in all probability are among the additions made to those original records. Stories of the miraculous conception, of the singing angels announcing the birth of Christ, of the fish taken with money in its mouth to pay taxes, and many another incident of strongly apocryphal sound, belong, it would appear, to these additions, for we have found such stories to be the sort of thing which it takes time to develop. Matthew was an eye-witness of many of the events in the life of Jesus, we are often told. To be sure he was ; and if we had a work direct from his hand it would go far to settle some questions now in dispute. But that work we have not, except as it has been recast and enlarged by other hands. In the First Gospel there is perhaps the substance of what Matthew wrote. But it is impossible now to say authoritatively what portions

are his, or whether a single statement stands as he left it. The favorite notion is that the original Matthew was restricted mainly to a record of the *words* of Jesus as he remembered them, and that the stories of miracle that appear in the narrative as we have it were an after-growth. This accords with what we know of the formation of such stories in other quarters, and, in the absence of any more reasonable conjecture, must be allowed to stand.

We may therefore suppose that Matthew from his own recollection wrote out, as fully as he was able after the lapse of thirty or forty years, the sayings of Jesus. Many of these had been preserved by constant repetition among the disciples ; other less familiar passages were in danger of being lost if not committed to writing. It is not to be supposed that if we had Matthew's own record, made, say thirty years after the events, it would be a perfectly accurate statement of what Jesus said and did. Much would inevitably have been forgotten in that time ; much more would have become confused and been mis-stated ; and not unlikely, under the changed conception of the nature of Christ, many natural events would have seemed supernatural. But we must remember we have no transcript of the real Matthew. We have the recast and enlargement of his work by an unknown hand at a much later date. No traces of the gospel as we have it are to be found until toward the close of the second century. For fifty years, at least, from Matthew's time it had been copied and enlarged upon by many persons. Of this we

are assured by the writer of the Third Gospel who introduces his version of the story in these words: "Inasmuch as *many* have undertaken to arrange a narrative of those things which are fully believed among us, even as they were delivered to us by those who were eye-witnesses from the beginning and became ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having accurately traced up all things from the first, to write to thee a connected account." Out of the "many" here referred to who had undertaken this task there remains only the First Gospel. The Third Gospel is written avowedly not by an eye-witness of the events narrated. The Second, in its present shape, is an enlargement on the work of a man who was himself not an apostle. The first is based on a writing, how extensive we do not know, of the Apostle Matthew. As far then as these three gospels are concerned we have nothing which can be certainly said to be in the nature of direct testimony as to the sayings and doings of Jesus. It is all somebody's report of what somebody else heard. Matthew's evidence is included in the gospel that goes under his name, but where his evidence begins or where it ends no one can say with certainty.

As proofs then of anything very improbable these writings cannot be accepted. But they are of inestimable value for what they contain of the teaching of Jesus, which is usually of such nature as to require no proof. The internal evidence of the genuineness of many of his sayings is often of the most convincing. They have a superiority of their own which separates them widely

from the comments and additions of the writers. We are able to select much which we may confidently believe to be substantially what he said ; a great part of the sermon on the mount, many of the parables, and other moral and religious utterances scattered through these three gospels. The truth of these sayings would not be better established if Jesus had written them out himself and we had his own manuscript. Take the Beatitudes or the Golden Rule or the two commandments which sum up the Law and the prophets, authentication of documents can do nothing to enhance the value or the authority of such teaching. It finds its sufficient testimony in every man's conscience.

But in the verification of narrative there is no such appeal. You cannot tell by putting it to your own consciousness whether Jesus spent the period of his ministry as the Synoptics say, mostly in Galilee, or, as John says, in Judea. To establish the truth of a narrative, especially if it contains anything improbable, it must come well authenticated. As the facts recorded increase in improbability the witnesses must be multiplied and their credentials must stand a closer scrutiny ; and where the asserted facts are in the highest degree improbable, contravening all experience and observation, the evidence brought must be direct, abundant and complete, to entitle the statement even to be considered. It is evident from what has been said that this is wholly wanting as regards the first three gospels. Hence, though they satisfy us that they contain very many genuine sayings of Jesus,

they come far short of establishing the credibility of a single miraculous incident.

The Gospel of John, it may be said, is the work of an eye-witness and makes up this deficiency of evidence. But the author of this gospel is an eye-witness only on the supposition that he is the Apostle John. I have before stated that it is absurd to suppose that the same person wrote this gospel and the book of Revelation. As a competent authority has said: "The translators of our New Testament have labored, and not in vain, to eliminate as far as possible all individuality of style and language, and to reduce the various books of which it is composed to one uniform smoothness of composition. It is therefore impossible for the mere English reader to appreciate the immense difference which exists between the harsh and Hebraistic Greek of the Apocalypse and the polished elegance of the Fourth Gospel, and it is to be feared that the rarity of critical study has prevented any general recognition of the almost equally striking contrast of thought between the two works."* As I took occasion to show in my last lecture, the book of Revelation is written from the standpoint of unmitigated Judaism. We have only to read the first chapters to see that. The Fourth Gospel, on the contrary, is distinguished by a decided aversion for Judaism; the writer showing that he is by no means a Jew. There is none of the spirit which breathes anathemas on those "who say they are Jews and are not." So it is the fashion of apologists to

* Supernatural Religion, Vol. II. p. 388,

say that John wrote it when he was a very old man, a long time after he wrote the Apocalypse. But the contrast between the two works is altogether too great to be gotten over in that way. Indeed the impossibility of the same man writing all the books attributed to John was very early seen and pointed out.* But for one reason and another the book of Revelation had come to be considered lightly. Gentile Christians did not relish its strong Jewish tone; moreover its prophecies had failed, and there was even an advantage in impeaching its apostolic authorship. Accordingly the drift of opinion in the early Church was in favour of the claim that John wrote the gospel and the epistles. Modern criticism has reversed this judgment, and upon ample grounds. The literature of the subject is immense, and the verdict of able critics is by no means unanimous, but the weight of opinion gives the Apocalypse to John and the other books to another hand, writing more than a century later. This view is strongly supported by the fact that no clear indication can be brought from the writings of the Christian Fathers that the Fourth Gospel was in existence until the latter part of the second century.† Irenæus is the first to speak of the four gospels, and he wrote nearly two hundred years after Christ. But the strongest indication that it was not written by a companion of Jesus is to be found in the work itself. It sets out with a theological formula, and the main purpose of the writer

* By Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, about the middle of the third century.

† First attributed to John by Theophilus of Antioch, about 180.

from first to last is to establish his formula. We cannot but feel as we read that he had no personal knowledge of Jesus. For his purpose he did not require any such knowledge. It is not the human Teacher that he proposes to set forth, but the divine Logos. It is no matter to him whether Jesus was ever born. Even a miraculous conception would be nothing to his purpose. The Eternal Word is better shown without the conditions of weakness and growth. So Jesus steps forth with no hint of birth or childhood. Little effort is made to keep the narrative in accord with the previous books. In fact we are introduced to other scenes at the opposite end of the country, and the natural human quality of the Master, which so distinguishes the representations of him in the Synoptics, gives place to the vague impression inseparable from an ideal character drawn expressly to be unlike any person that the world had ever seen. The other gospels agree to a noticeable extent in the utterances they attribute to Jesus, but this makes him utter long speeches of which they afford us no hint. Fewer miracles are introduced, but this is only that such as are related may have the more striking effect. That suspiciously apocryphal way of relating marvels seen in the first chapters of *Matthew* and in *The Acts*—throwing them in loosely as though they were trifles, this writer studiously avoids, and gives us to understand when he records a miracle he fully appreciates the prodigious import of his words. The miracle is done, according to him, not to benefit the subjects but that the doer may manifest his glory. Not

content with exaggerating the accounts of the previous writers, he relates another and still more astounding story of his own, giving it a careful and most significant setting. He states, with full and minute detail, that Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave after he had been four days unmistakably dead. This was done publicly and as we might well suppose made a great sensation. The priests and Pharisees at once held a council and determined on putting Jesus to death.* Now is it possible that such a stupendous event as this, leading directly to such dire consequences, could have taken place without a word being said of it in the other three gospels?

But the necessity to be brief forbids a lengthy statement of the inconsistencies and contradictions between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. When once you take up this book that is called John's, understanding that it was written for a dogmatic purpose—to establish the superhuman nature of Christ—and more than a hundred years after the crucifixion, its whole style and structure become intelligible. It is the work of a student in his closet who has a very fascinating religious philosophy to illustrate. He takes such facts from the books before him as will serve his purpose, embellishes them to his needs, and adds from tradition or from fancy whatever more his plan may seem to require. Of course it is possible that some of the discourses attributed to Jesus by this writer may be genuine, but his method of narration is not such as to inspire confidence. As Renan says,

* John xi.

“he does not relate, he demonstrates.” He does not stop with telling *what* a man said, but must inform us *why* he said it. He seems to doubt that we will believe his statements and so repeats them, averring that he is telling us the truth. This is not the method of a person who is entirely conscious that he is stating facts.

We must now look back a little and see how the writing of the gospels was affected by the controversy in the Church over the admission of Gentiles. That controversy was at its height at the time when Matthew is supposed to have written his original Recollections. If we had that work we should probably find it about as judaistic as is the Apocalypse. Matthew was one of the twelve who stood by Peter and James, and these men all had that very human quality of storing up in remembrance what was most to their own minds. Our *Matthew*, which is a revision and enlargement of this, made about the beginning of the second century, was no doubt greatly modified from the original in this respect. By that time the struggle was practically over, and there remained only the personal asperities which survive every strife. Paul's views had triumphed, and a gospel for the use of the Church must not be distinctly Jewish. Still there remain traces in this work of an anti-Pauline spirit, so far at least assuring us that something of the original Matthew stands there. In the charge to the Twelve, Jesus is made to say very pointedly, “Go not away to Gentiles, and enter not any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;”* and

* Matt. x. 5, 6.

there is no intimation that this direction was merely temporary. Indeed it is expressly indicated that this restriction of the gospel to the Jews was final, for he says further, in the same address: "Ye will not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man hath come."* Scarcely less decisive as showing the Jewish spirit of this gospel is the account of an interview which a foreign woman sought with Jesus. Her daughter was ill—"possessed of a demon," in the language of the time—and she sought very piteously his assistance. "But he did not answer her a word." Then when his disciples wished him to be yet more discourteous to the woman and send her away, he said in her hearing: "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" adding, "It is not allowable to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." "Dogs" was the sneering Jewish expression† for people of other races. The woman, with extraordinary concession to this contemptuous bigotry, threw herself at his feet and reminded him that the little dogs do eat the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters."‡ The humiliation of the Gentile is intensified in this representation by the fact that the "crumbs" here referred to are probably the slices of bread which the Jews used to wipe their hands with before eating, and then tossed to the dogs. Observing the use of the term "dogs," there can be no doubt that the reference is the same in the passage, "Give not that which is holy to

* v. 23.

† Rev. xxii. 15.

‡ xv. 24-26.

dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine.”* “Swine” is in sufficiently contemptuous allusion to swine-eaters. Jesus, according to this gospel, is careful to enjoin observance of the law, “one jot or tittle” of which shall not be abrogated.† When he heals a leper he directs him to comply with the ceremonial “which Moses commanded.”‡ “The scribes and Pharisees sit in the seat of Moses. All, therefore, whatever they bid you, do and observe.”§ The reward of the apostles in heaven was to be to “sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”|| Jesus himself at his birth is spoken of as “King of the Jews.”¶ Of course the writer would not commit the anachronism of making Jesus speak directly of Paul; but there are few passages where, in professedly reporting the Master’s sayings, the reporter appears to have Paul in mind. The admission of the Gentiles to the Church had been an exceeding great offence to the Jewish Christians and had been the cause of many falling away, altogether. Referring to such a result Jesus is made to say, “Whoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe in me to fall away it were better for him to have a mill-stone hung round his neck and be swallowed up in the depth of the sea.” “Woe to the man through whom the offence cometh!”** The parable of the tares may not unlikely have been constructed in allusion to Paul. The Christian Jews are the wheat; the Gentiles stealthily brought into the fold are the tares. But by the time of this writing

* vii. 6. For other depreciative references to Gentiles see vi. 32, x. 18, xx. 10.

† v. 11-19. ‡ viii. 4. § xxiii. 2, 3. || xix. 28. ¶ ii. 2. ** xviii. 6, 7.

they have become so firmly rooted that to weed them out would result in the uprooting of the Church itself. Let them grow now till the harvest; then there will be a fearful sorting of the crop.*

Another noticeable Jewish feature of this gospel is that almost everything that occurs happens in order that some "Scripture may be fulfilled." In many instances lamentable misapplication of prophecy is made; but the point to which I wish especially to call attention is that the narrative seems to be made up rather from what the writer considers the requirements of prophecy than from actual occurrences. It is easy to see that this catching at any word of the old Scriptures supposed to refer to the Messiah, would directly engender a circle of myths about Jesus which in a little while would harden into positive assertions. It is unnecessary, for instance, that the child Jesus should be taken to Egypt and brought back on the death of Herod. It is enough that the passage was found in one of the prophets: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." By a strange perversion of the sense this is made to refer to Christ, and "that the Scripture may be fulfilled" the story is told of the flight into Egypt. So of the associated incident of the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem; and so of various other incidents peculiar to this gospel. Only a thorough-going Jew would write in this fashion, and we do not wonder that such a work, even when brought to its present shape, proved unsatisfactory to the churches established by Paul.

*xiii. 24-30, 36-43.

Not many years after some one in sympathy with the doctrines of that apostle wrote a gospel, the third in the present order, from which the offensively Jewish features of Matthew were excluded. The conciliatory disposition of this writer we have had occasion to remark, if, as is commonly supposed, he is also the author of the Acts. We should expect that such a writer, whose strength lay in abolishing distinctions, would present Pauline views in as little contrast with the letter of existing records as possible; that in making his own liberal statements he would, in the style of some modern divines, weave in enough of the old phraseology to take away the appearance of saying anything revolutionary. And so we find him doing. Thus, after making Jesus say, in truly Pauline fashion: "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man presses into it;" he adds immediately an extract from Matthew; "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the Law to fail."* Thus he would really make a divergence in favor of Gentile Christianity while nominally adhering to the old formulas, which is as bad as closing a Unitarian service with the Trinitarian doxology. Very different was this from the manner of Paul; but we must remember the intensity of the contest was over, and the victorious party had now something to gain by being conciliatory. The Church had become impressed with the need of securing

* Luke xvi. 16, 17. Some explain this inconsistency by supposing that *Luke*, like *Matthew*, was worked over by another hand.

to itself at any cost the repute of holding to the apostolic leadership, and much abstract Judaism could be tolerated now that the concrete thing was destitute of actual power.

However it would seem that this gospel, called Luke's, was not altogether satisfactory to all parties, and that another effort was made at a final statement, which is preserved to us in the Gospel called after Mark. The plan of the writer of this Gospel was, with the other two before him, to reach an acceptable version of the story by the excision of what in either of them might be objectionable to Jew or Gentile. The result was a brief and rather bald narrative, which, whatever purpose it may have served at the time, can hardly be said now to be of much use.

We pass on forty or fifty years. By this time the old issue about circumcision and the eating of meat which had been offered to idols has given way to more metaphysical disputations. Christianity has swung out into the circle of Hellenistic philosophy, and problems begin to be pressed concerning the nature of God, and especially concerning the nature of Christ; some already going so far as to claim for him pre-existence and quasi-divinity. Philo, though not a Christian, had taught a hazy doctrine of a divine *Logos*, or Word, which he fancied had an actual existence apart from God himself, and was the agency of his manifestations. This became a popular notion with the Jews of Alexandria and other cities where Christianity had obtained a foothold, and the idea began to be broached that Jesus was this divine *Logos* clothed in

flesh. The Fourth Gospel is a "Life of Jesus," written expressly to establish this view. This is the main purpose. Incidentally, however, the author's disposition as regards Judaism is plainly indicated. More distinctly than any other New Testament writer he counts himself outside that system. He constantly speaks of the Jews as though they were a class to which he does not belong,* and even shows a strong antipathy toward them. They are the "children of the devil," and do the works of their father who was "a murderer from the beginning."† In the First Gospel the Gentiles are the ones pointed at as the incarnation of evil; in the Fourth the situation is reversed, and the Jews are the ones who are forever plotting mischief and seeking to kill Jesus.‡ This feature, together with the fact that the writer betrays ignorance of the geography and customs of Judea, leads us to infer that he could not have been a Jew, least of all so inveterate a Jew as was the Apostle John. The very tone of this gospel toward Judaism indicates its late origin. Only when Christianity had passed completely out of Jewish hands could it have produced and canonized a work making such reflections on the chosen people. Paul labored hard in his epistle to the Romans to make out that a Gentile was good enough to be mentioned in the same connection with a Jew. The Fourth Gospel brings us into the atmosphere of another century, when Chris-

John ii. 6, 13; v. 1; vi. 4; vii. 2; xix. 40, 42.

† viii. 44.

‡ v. 16, 18; vii. 13, 19; vii. 40, 59; ix. 22, 28, &c., &c.

tians began to look upon Jews as types of malignity and murderers of the Son of God.

So widely different in all respects is the portraiture of Jesus in this gospel from what it is in the other three, that it becomes necessary, even on this ground, to suppose a considerable intervening lapse of time before the writing of the Fourth Gospel, as well as a Gentile authorship. There is no doubt that the writer wishes us to think him the Apostle John, though he nowhere distinctly says that he is the Apostle. He avers that he is a witness of what he relates and that his testimony is true.* But the evidence of a witness who withholds his name is not highly esteemed in court though he swear by all the gods. Especially if the witness does not personally appear, but submits his testimony in writing, is it essential to have his unmistakable signature. There are the strongest reasons for supposing this to be the work of a writer in the latter half of the second century, who desired to have it pass as by the Apostle John. Two important ends were to be gained by this transfer of authorship.

A high degree of authority would be at once secured to the book, and the reputation of the apostle would be saved from the imputation of Jewish narrowness which his only book, the Apocalypse, and the references to him in Paul's epistles were sure to fasten upon him. As for the moral obliquity of writing in the name of another and more famous person, as I have repeatedly said, the Bible writers do not appear to have recognised it. By

* xix. 35 ; xxi. 24.

far the greater part of the Scriptures were written in this way. The uncritical character of the readers was a sufficient guaranty against suspicion under ordinary circumstances. Even the leading men in the Church were so credulous, and had such fantastic notions of the order of the universe and of divine revelation, that no conclusions can be drawn from their acquiescence in the apostolic authorship of any book. Irenæus is among the best reputed of these men, and the puerility of his notions on the problem of the gospels is almost past belief. Why should the Gospels be four in number? was a query to which this learned prelate addressed himself. "The Gospels," he says, "can neither be more in number than they are, nor, on the other hand, can they be fewer. For, as there are four quarters of the world in which we are, and four general winds, and the Church is disseminated throughout all the world, and the Gospel is the pillar and prop of the Church and the spirit of life, it is right that she should have four pillars. . . . As is the form of living creatures, such also is the character of the Gospel. Living creatures are of four orders, so the Gospel is in four forms. These things being thus, vain and ignorant and moreover audacious are they who set aside the form of the Gospel, and declare the aspects of the Gospels as either more or less than has been said."

We certainly cannot be wrong if we refuse to be influenced much in the decision of questions now before us by men who could reason in this way about them. And yet the whole argument for the current supposition that the

gospels were written by the men whose names are attached to them, rests on the acceptance of that view by Christians of the third and subsequent centuries. But even their verdict was by no means unanimous, credulous and uncritical as they were. Some, we are told, disputed the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel. Dissentients, however, were soon branded as heretics, and for more than a thousand years it was all a man's life was worth to handle a question concerning the authenticity of one of these writings, fairly, fearlessly, and with the single aim of finding out the truth. The general consent of the Church, therefore, is entitled to no weight in this matter.

Thus the case stands as to the four gospels. They are without exception documents written in the second century. That there existed older writings from which these were made, is certain ; and the general concurrence of the Synoptics strengthens the opinion that they follow the oldest tradition. The wide divergence of the Fourth Gospel, however, rather weakens this opinion without establishing confidence in its own report ; and we are compelled to say that for the facts of the life of Jesus the evidence is scanty and weak. It is adequate to ground a belief in the reality of incidents not in themselves improbable ; it leaves us no reason to doubt that he lived and taught ; that he was a man every way superior to his disciples ; that, after a brief public career, he was taken and put to death by his enemies. This much, not antecedently incredible, it is necessary to suppose to account for re-

sults ; and for this much the testimony is ample. But the testimony breaks down the moment you undertake to sustain by it a single miraculous incident. There is wanting the clear declaration of eye-witnesses which is necessary to entitle the statement of so improbable an occurrence as a miracle to the slightest credence.

The time was when these stories of marvel served a purpose as evidence of Christianity, and then of course they were treasured. Now Christianity, as best represented, is very desirous of being relieved of them ; for, instead of being evidence of anything, they are themselves the things most in need of proof. It is not too much to say that he best serves the religion of Christ at present who does most to deliver it from the incubus. One of the compensations for the disappointment which we must feel in finding not one of our Gospels to be by a contemporary of Jesus, or even dating from the same century, lies in the resulting fact that these writings cannot be appealed to in support of any *very* improbable event. It does not follow that when the incredible stories of the Gospels and the Acts are discredited Christianity is discredited with them. The soundness of the Golden Rule is not contingent upon the truth of the statement that Jesus and Peter walked upon the surface of the sea ; nor is the summary of human duties in the twelfth chapter of *Romans* impeached by our venturing to doubt the story told of Paul, that the sick were healed by passing his handkerchiefs among them. Goodness, however exalted, confers no power over the forces of nature ; and

there is no real connection between pure religion and the marvels of which many religious books are so full. Rejection of incredible stories in nowise weakens our hold upon the divine principles which are the substance of every faith that is worth having.

We seek the realities. Our study of the Bible has been with a view to clear it of illusions and phantoms, that the truth it contains may have the more commanding force. The incongruous elements of the book must be separated. Magic and demonology, which the ancients associated with religion, are out of cast in the modern world; but the spirit of the great Teacher, which under all obscurities rests like a halo about the New Testament, will never cease to charm the thoughtful and win from serious souls an intense and strong affection. As we have seen it is a book of which we can name the writers of only a few parts; but of every part we can say that it has a nobleness and beauty of its own. That which fails as history stands with the finest of fiction, like old epics, dealing according to the popular creeds with gods and demigods. It is not less the book of religion because there is so much in it that is purely imaginary. The poetry of the Church is in its Bible—certainly not in its hymn-book. And when we are able to read it as the very natural reflection of a remote and most interesting though utterly unscientific age, bringing us the soul of the greatest spiritual movement in history in strictly human form, it cannot but have a charm and a worth it never had before. As another has tersely said, the Bible in the new view is not less, but *other* than it was.

